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# The Bad Lands cow boy : journalism on the Dakota frontier

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The Bad Lands Cow Boy:  
Journalism on the Dakota frontier

by  
Barry Grant Brissman

A Thesis Submitted to the  
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Journalism and Mass Communication

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa  
1981

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## I. Introduction

"Oh, what was your name in the States,  
Was it Johnson or Thompson or Bates?  
Did you murder your wife and flee for your life?  
Oh, what was your name in the States!"

The Bad Lands Cow Boy<sup>1</sup>

In western Dakota in the 1880s when a man unfolded The Bad Lands Cow Boy he experienced something largely inaccessible to us now—inaccessible because the isolation and emptiness in which he turned the pages of the Cow Boy no longer exist. Today, when the din of radio and television news is almost inescapable, when news magazines are everywhere to be found, when a single Sunday paper often contains more words than a person can read in an entire week, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to imagine the importance of a four page weekly news sheet to the man who read it on the frontier against a backdrop of buttes and desolation.

News was scarce on the frontier. In the range country, bored cowboys out of work could ride the "grub line" and find

themselves welcome at the dinner table of every ranch they stopped at, so long as they were willing to recount the latest news and gossip from all the other ranches they had visited.<sup>2</sup> Men in western mining camps lined the streets in their thousands to receive letters whenever a mail wagon arrived carrying news from the outside world,<sup>3</sup> and those who received newspapers could sell them for large prices, or could read them aloud and charge each listener a fee.<sup>4</sup> Frequently frontier newspapers were passed from hand to hand till they became illegible.<sup>5</sup> Though papers appeared early in the western country, and in considerable numbers, the west was vast and in many areas they weren't readily available.

Papers became established in various ways in the west. Some started up even before the country in which they were published had been settled. The Railway Advance, for instance, was printed in a boxcar and published under the heading "End of Track" as it accompanied Kansas Pacific railroad construction crews across the continent.<sup>6</sup> Other papers, like the Huntsman's Echo of Wood River, Nebraska, started up in unsettled areas and then attempted to conjure out of thin air the towns which would support them. Frequently newspapers were subsidized by townsite companies, citizens' committees, speculators, or emigrant societies, on the general principle that no town could

prosper without a good newspaper to speak up for it and boom its virtues to prospective emigrants in the east.<sup>7</sup> Other fledgling news sheets were strictly private ventures, established by editorial entrepreneurs who sought to help their adopted towns while helping themselves.

Most frontier papers provided their readers with news and entertainment in a style closely related to the oral tradition of story telling, a style which was colorful and personal, and which made no fine distinctions between hard facts and embroidery, opinion and advertisements. Items of news frequently contained considerable editorial comment, and news columns were often sprinkled with editorial suggestions that readers try particular brands of cigars or shipments of oranges available from particular local merchants.<sup>8</sup> Sometimes news reports were transmogrified into entertainment pieces by a humorous style of writing so ironic and literary that the "facts" of the case were barely recognizable. On at least one occasion A. T. Packard, the young and exuberant editor of The Bad Lands Cow Boy, managed to print an entertainment piece which had elements of local news and editorial comment, and which ended by being an advertisement for insurance.<sup>9</sup>

Packard had much in common with other frontier editors. He lived and worked in a single room which invariably he

referred to as his editorial "sanctum." He acted as "editor-in-chief, business manager, associate editors, reporters, foreman, printers and his Satanic Majesty"<sup>10</sup> for his paper. He not only published his paper and did printing job work, but engaged in various other business enterprises in the town. Like many another frontier editor he accepted commodities in lieu of cash for subscriptions, and in return for his editorial puffs recommending goods of local merchants. He hired tramp printers from time to time. He engaged in editorial battles with other papers. He occasionally got stung by hoaxes perpetrated by a fun-loving public. He defended with fists and other weapons his right to print what he pleased. Like nearly every editor in the west he boomed the glories of his town and county in hopes of inducing men and women to come and settle. He espoused the values of civilization under conditions of life in which it was easy to forget them. He fought for the establishment of the institutions of civilization, political and cultural, educational and religious. And, like thousands of editors of country weeklies across the country, he printed his local matter on the blank side of ready-print sheets which he purchased from a newspaper union—sheets which were already printed on one side with world news, U. S. news, and sundry entertainments and advertisements.



Even Packard's writing style, a curious blend of wild cowboy talk, erudition, hyperbole, and sober argument, was similar to that of many of his fellow editors. For if le style c'est l'homme, it is equally true that style is the age, and depends heavily upon the linguistic conventions of the day. The present study does not attempt to distinguish between personal and traditional elements in Packard's style. This means that readers unfamiliar with a wide range of frontier writing—journalistic and otherwise—may overestimate Packard's originality in some cases, underestimate it in others. The liberal quotations in chapter two from Packard's chief competitor, The Dickinson Press, will provide at least one point of comparison between Packard's style and that of his contemporaries.

Likewise, the present study does not attempt to distinguish the commonplace from the unique in any other aspect of Packard's editorial practice. Instead, leaving to general historians of frontier journalism the task of calculating statistical truth and drawing broad conclusions, it focuses strictly upon Packard, his paper, and the county which they served. It attempts to sketch the problems and pleasures facing Packard as editor, to reproduce the flavor of the newspaper by quoting freely from its columns, and to show how both editor and paper influenced the development of the

territory. Unfortunately, Packard's private records and papers have never been uncovered—perhaps many of them were destroyed in the fire which finally ended the Cow Boy in the awful winter of 1886. The result is that for the most part we can only view the goings-on in the Cow Boy office from a little distance, occasionally looking in through a window to glimpse the editor at his work but seldom able to enter the sanctum itself, or the mind of the editor as he moves through his Bad Lands days.

The story of The Bad Lands Cow Boy depends largely upon an analysis of the copies of the newspaper which still exist, and fortunately these are numerous. Missing are only 20 of the 151 weekly editions which Packard is known to have published.<sup>11</sup> We also know a good deal about the community in which Packard lived and worked, and this information is indispensable. For a newspaper—like anything else—must be seen against the background of which it is inextricably a part, if it is to be in any sense understood. Packard's sheet was not mere ink and newsprint. Nor was it merely Packard and his numerous readers, printers, stand-in editors. The Bad Lands Cow Boy was desolate buttes, herds of cattle, Bob Roberts' saloon, the dream of a Frenchman, whores that never appeared in its pages, Bad Man Finnegan on the shoot, hail storms and prairie fires, mule trains and the Montana

Strangers and Alaska John's Oyster Grotto and the Fourth of July and all the other things that a young college graduate named Packard encountered following that hour almost a hundred years ago when his train clattered across a trestle and stopped at a shabby depot on the banks of the Little Missouri River.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. The Bad Lands Cow Boy (Little Missouri and Medora, Dakota Territory: February 7, 1884—December 23, 1886), June 26, 1884. Hereafter cited as Cow Boy.
2. Everett Dick, Vanguards of the Frontier (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1941), pp. 377-378.
3. Richard B. Hughes, Pioneer Years in the Black Hills (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1957), pp. 111-112. Describing early days in Deadwood, Hughes writes: "It was not uncommon to see a crowd of from 1,500 to 2,500 men present at such a delivery. Several clerks were kept busy handing out letters, and as many more in weighing in the dust paid for them."
4. Robert F. Karolevitz, Newspapering in the Old West, A Pictorial History of Journalism and Printing on the Frontier (Seattle, Washington: Superior Publishing Company, 1965), p.31. Karolevitz gives an example in Dawson City, Yukon Territory, in 1898.
5. Everett Dick, The Sod-House Frontier, 1854-1890, A Social History of the Northern Plains from the Creation of Kansas and Nebraska to the Admission of the Dakotas (Lincoln, Nebraska: Johnsen Publishing Company, 1954), p. 418.
6. Dick, Vanguards, p. 376.
7. Dick, Sod-House, pp. 417-418.
8. Cow Boy, March 5, 1885: "Chas. Cook has received a large supply of oranges and lemons and we know from experience that they are excellent."
9. Cow Boy, February 26, 1885.
10. Cow Boy, November 19, 1885.

11. 129 weekly numbers of the Cow Boy are in the microfilm files of the State Historical Society of North Dakota, and one weekly number not in those files is held by the Minnesota Historical Society.

## II. Drifter

Buildings out of all reason are hurried up, stores established and soon a town blossoms out, fair to the eye but consisting only of an outer shell,—an appearance.

The Bad Lands Cow Boy<sup>1</sup>

In late November, 1883, a tall young man, slim but with the solid build of a college athlete, descended from the train at Little Missouri, Dakota Territory. He'd drifted into town to see the famous Bad Lands, to relax, to do a little hunting. Because he was a newspaperman he'd come also with half a notion to look the place over with a view to starting a paper here.<sup>2</sup> He couldn't have known, as he walked away from the tracks of the Northern Pacific, that in a single evening he'd encounter all those elements of Bad Lands life out of which would grow the four main themes of his future paper, as well as its name—that he'd encounter a cowboy, the cold of coming winter, a horse thief, an illusion as tall as the hotel.

To the traveller approaching from the depot shack, the

Pyramid Park Hotel appeared mighty promising, its fine white facade rising above the rest of the settlement. Inside, it was less impressive. Around the large hotel office were scattered rude chairs and benches. In a corner stood a desk on which a small showcase displayed an array of cheap cigars with brilliant labels. A sink with two tin wash basins stood in another corner, and near this two filthy sack towels hung on rollers. The walls of the office were plastered with posters.<sup>3</sup> Guests slept upstairs in a large room known as the "bull-pen,"<sup>4</sup> where fourteen hard canvas cots were placed heads-to-the-wall beneath high rafters. Each cot rented for two bits a night, complete with a greasy feather pillow, several quilts, and whatever crawling livestock had been left by previous sleepers.<sup>5</sup>

Proprietor of the Pyramid Park was plump and oily Frank Moore, who usually wore a bright red mackinaw shirt, multi-colored silk neckerchief, fringed buckskin trousers, and tall boots with decorated tops. Moore was a friendly, good-natured, big-hearted fellow, a practical joker who liked jokes that went off with a bang. He was also an inveterate liar, a teller of the filthiest tales in the Bad Lands, and a drunk.<sup>6</sup> He had met young Packard some time ago in Mandan, and now, late November, he greeted the newspaperman with great enthusiasm and made him more than welcome at his hotel. After supper, as

Packard sat in the barroom writing a letter home, Moore strolled over to him and said in a whisper, "You told me down in Mandan that you'd never seen an honest-to-goodness cowboy. See that fellow at the farther end of the bar? Well, that's a real cowboy."

Packard looked up, saw a man at the end of the bar who sure enough appeared to be the genuine article, complete with hat and chaps and gunbelt—just the sort of local color to interest the folks back home in Indiana. So Packard began to write the cowboy into his letter, describing him meticulously. From time to time he looked up at him to get the details right, and he wondered why the fellow kept his back so carefully to the wall. Eventually the cowboy noticed Packard's scrutiny. But at that moment Frank Moore strolled over to the man and whispered a few words of explanation.

When Packard finished his letter he stood up and headed for the door, intending to take it to the lightning jerker at the depot telegraph office and ask him to mail it for him on the eastbound train which passed at three in the morning. But when he opened the door an icy blast of night air hit him, freezing him momentarily between the fire in the room and the cold of coming winter. He stood for an instant in the door frame, unaware of the importance of the decision he was about to make. And then he turned back into the room



and closed the door.<sup>7</sup>

The following morning when he left the hotel he could see the entire settlement of Little Missouri in a few long glances. A quarter mile to the west in a clump of cottonwood trees stood the cantonment, a group of log buildings built by the army in 1879 as a garrison to defend railroad construction crews against attacks of hostile Indians.<sup>8</sup> Frank Moore had been post trader at the cantonment in those days, had made his money providing rotgut whisky to soldiers. Then a Welshman named Bob Roberts had turned up and more or less run Frank out of business by concocting a brand of hooch called "Forty-Mile Red Eye."<sup>9</sup> Bob's stuff had the kick of a government mule and became the great favorite of Bad Lands residents, most of whom were frequently stupefied by Bob's success. "Big-mouthed Bob's Bug-Juice Dispensary" (otherwise known as the Senate Saloon) now stood north of the tracks just next to the Pyramid Park Hotel, and both buildings were close by the depot shack. A little distance along the track to the westward stood a section house and water tank,<sup>10</sup> and to the east lay the three hundred foot trestle that carried the tracks of the Northern Pacific across the Little Missouri river. Just this side of the trestle a number of rude buildings straggled along the river bank, among them the residence of lean and shifty-eyed Gerry

Paddock, prominent in Little Missouri as a businessman, outlaw, and killer. For the rest, the town consisted of Johnny Nelson's general store, Mrs. Malloy's boarding house, a few frame houses in final stages of construction, several huts in the sagebrush, three or four miners' shacks just beyond the tracks at the base of Graveyard Butte.<sup>11</sup> Already two men had been buried in the cemetery atop the butte. The first had been shot by Gerry Paddock. So had the second, most likely.<sup>12</sup>

As Packard walked the negligible and dusty street of Little Missouri, smelling the sagebrush that grew near every building, it is very probable that he saw somewhat more than met his eye, saw not only what was but what might be. For he had reason to believe a boom was about to occur here. This belief was based partly on well-informed speculations, expressed in a host of magazine articles and books, that cattle would thrive on the northern ranges,<sup>13</sup> and based partly on the actions of a character straight out of medieval romance, a Frenchman who not long ago had built a thirty-room chateau south of town. The chateau was of wood, red-roofed and red-shuttered, and stood isolate and baronial and spectacular on a hill commanding a view both of Little Missouri on this side of the river and of the new town of Medora situated on the eastern bank. Until eight months ago there

had been only sagebrush and bunch grass on the eastern side. Then the Frenchman had arrived and sprinkled money on the land, and a town had sprouted almost magically, like mushrooms after rain—a town complete with store, office buildings, hotel, blacksmith shop, stable, and, looming above all else, a slaughterhouse which was to be the basis of the town's economy.<sup>14</sup> Packard, however, was most interested in the office which the Frenchman had failed to build.

That afternoon Packard mounted his horse and, on an errand now forgotten, rode up the river toward Chimney Butte ranch where a young New York politician named Theodore Roosevelt had recently put in a herd of cattle. He rode southward through cottonwood brakes and sage into the silences of buttes and broken hills and ravines and fantastic formations, through a strange and colorful landscape streaked with scoria and coal outcroppings. The Indians had called it The-Place-Where-The-Hills-Look-At-Each-Other and, later, Frenchmen attempting to cross it and coming to one futile dead end after another had marked it down as mauvaises terres à traverser—bad lands to cross. Much later, 1869, General Sully had passed through and made his memorable remark that it looked like Hell with the fires out.<sup>15</sup> Yet its shallow river and sparse plant growth supported large and small game of all kinds, beaver and sage grouse and pronghorns and

coyotes and bear and black-tailed deer and even a few small herds of buffalo which huddled and hid amid the buttes, almost the last of their race which once had numbered millions. Now men were betting fortunes that the Bad Lands could also support cattle, and could support a town.

Packard heard sudden hoofbeats behind him. When he looked over his shoulder he saw a cowboy drawing near—and he recognized him as the same cowboy he'd described in his letter last night in the barroom. The fellow came up level and a moment later the two men were loping along together, chatting.

But evidently the cowboy was after something, was looking for information. Packard had nothing to hide and therefore he spoke up freely and answered all his questions. He told him he was a newspaperman.

"So you're a newspaper feller," said the cowboy.  
"That's damn funny. But I guess it's so if you say so. You see, Frank Moore he said you was a deputy-sheriff on the lookout for a horse-thief."

Packard felt fear tingling his scalp.

"Where was you going last night when you started to go out?" asked the cowboy.

"To the telegraph-office."

"I made up my mind you was going to telegraph," said

the man.

Packard denied it. "I was just going to mail a letter," he said.

"Well, if you'd gone I'd have killed you."

The two men rode on through the broken land, speaking of other things. Within a year one would be a corpse at the end of a rope, the other chairman of the vigilance committee that had hanged him.<sup>16</sup>

Packard had come to Dakota to investigate the boomer claims of the Northern Pacific Railroad concerning the wonderful opportunities in Dakota for bonanza farming. He'd acted as advance agent for various members of his family, including his father, who were interested in investing in Dakota.<sup>17</sup> His father was General Jasper Packard, illustrious veteran of the Union Army, three-time Representative to Congress from Indiana, editor and publisher of the La Porte Chronicle from 1874 to 1878. On the Chronicle young Arthur T. Packard had gotten his first journalistic experience. He had served at the age of thirteen as his father's managing editor. He'd then attended Oberlin Academy in Ohio, and at nineteen had matriculated at Oberlin College, his father's

old school. His studies there included six terms of rhetorical exercises, four terms of Latin, four terms of Greek, and courses in geometry, algebra, trigonometry, evidences, natural philosophy, and mechanics. In 1881, after two years at Oberlin, he'd enrolled at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, again as his father before him had done. At Michigan he'd gained renown as a baseball pitcher, was hailed as the first varsity player ever to throw a curve ball, the greatest pitcher ever to wear the maize and blue. He'd graduated from Michigan with the B.A. degree in 1883, and shortly thereafter boarded the train for Dakota Territory.<sup>18</sup>

In Dakota he found the boomer claims of the Northern Pacific's literature to be misleading. "Dry farming," it turned out, was not profitable except during the one year in five when a freak wet spell made bumper crops possible.<sup>19</sup> So he ignored the patter of the land boomers, looked for work he knew, took a job as managing editor of the Bismarck Tribune. His duties on the Tribune included not only writing news copy and advertising copy, but defending his right to print what he pleased by throwing various objectors down the stairs. He eventually moved from Bismarck across the river to Mandan and took charge of the Tribune's Mandan department.<sup>20</sup>

While working in the twin Dakota towns of Bismarck and Mandan on the banks of the upper Missouri, Packard began to hear tales of the Bad Lands. Doubtless he heard many of them fresh from the buttes, for the population of Little Missouri travelled the hundred and thirty miles east to the "big cities" at least once a month, if possible, to get an eyefull of bright lights. It was here Packard met the booze-breathed, likeable, and filthy-mouthed Frank Moore, who was to greet him so effusively when he arrived in Little Missouri the following November. Here he met Theodore Roosevelt when that gentleman "stopped over a train to have his buffalo head mounted." Here he met the shifty-eyed Gerry Paddock, who engaged in numerous business ventures in the Bad Lands, some of them honest. Here too he met Antoine-Amédée-Marie-Vincent-Amat Manca de Vallombrosa—the Marquis de Morès.<sup>21</sup>

De Morès' varied life had included a rich childhood, time spent tending Franco-Prussian war casualties at Cannes, study and a degree at the Jesuit College of Poitiers, two years of military training at St. Cyr, a year of training at the world-famous cavalry school of Saumur, army duty in northern France, and a flutter of speculation and large losses on the Bourse.<sup>22</sup> But mainly what folks knew about de Morès when he appeared in Dakota Territory was this:

that he intended to build a cattle empire in the Bad Lands and put the Chicago stockyards out of business by killing beef right on the range and shipping dressed meat east by refrigerator car. They knew, too, that he was recently married to the daughter of Wall Street banker Louis A. von Hoffman, and that with von Hoffman's wealth and his own he had tremendous financial resources behind him.

The idea of shipping dressed meat to eastern markets in refrigerator cars was not original with the Marquis, but he alone had grabbed hold of the idea and determined to make a fortune out of it on the northern range.<sup>23</sup> He'd arrived in western Dakota Territory in the spring of 1883, and from the first moment had been prime newspaper copy from Dakota to Paris. Journalists waxed rhapsodic over his grandiose beef scheme, and the public never tired of reading about this ebullient Frenchman who was not only—in true romantic style—tall, dark, handsome and mustachioed, but who sat a horse beautifully, was a dead shot with both pistol and rifle, and proved at every opportunity that he didn't know the meaning of the word fear. In addition to all of this, the Marquis kept his public breathless with proclamations concerning new schemes he was about to set in motion—schemes to raise sheep in the Bad Lands, to ship Pacific salmon to New York in refrigerator cars, to string a telegraph line



to Deadwood, to build a pottery works in Medora, to sell a new soup of his own concoction to the French government, to start a stage line to the Black Hills, and so forth.<sup>24</sup> Some of these schemes he actually undertook, for he was better at making startling beginnings than at almost anything else. He was, in fact, a man of instant action. When he arrived in Little Missouri and found he'd have no foothold there unless he allowed Frank Moore to swindle him by selling him the cantonment buildings without a clear title,<sup>25</sup> de Morès promptly crossed the river to the eastern side, pitched his tent, and on April 1, 1883, founded his own town, smashing open a bottle of champagne to celebrate the event.<sup>26</sup> He named the town Medora after his new wife. Soon the carpenters arrived. And the town rose.

By that late November day when Packard found himself riding south along the Little Missouri with a horse thief, all preparations had been made for a boom to occur in Medora and Little Missouri. A slaughterhouse had been built, and not only the Marquis but a number of people across the Bad Lands, the territory, and the states were awaiting with great interest the day when cattle would be driven into Medora and operations at the slaughterhouse would begin. Packard knew this, and it was one of the reasons he was pondering starting a newspaper in this place. He wouldn't

take long to make his decision.

Perhaps he went to the red-roofed mansion, or perhaps to the Marquis' company office in town to tell de Morès his scheme. The Marquis listened, and was surprisingly indifferent to the idea. But finally, seeing that a newspaper might be useful to his enterprise, he offered to finance the venture. Packard quickly refused this offer, for he preferred to finance his own newspaper and maintain editorial independence, even if this meant starting on a smaller scale.<sup>27</sup> He explained to the Marquis that all he was asking was a building to rent, in which to set up his presses.

Though de Morès didn't like being rebuffed, he nonetheless agreed to let Packard use the town blacksmith shop for a newspaper office if, in return, Packard would agree to run in the new newspaper a weekly advertisement for de Morès' Northern Pacific Refrigerator Car Company. Packard quickly accepted this offer. His new venture was begun.<sup>28</sup>

December. January. In the cold of a Bad Lands winter Packard planned his paper, dreamed its name. He ordered necessary equipment, "everything from presses to galley rack . . . brand new from the best type foundry in the United States."<sup>29</sup> He made arrangements with the Northwestern Newspaper Union in St. Paul to supply him with ready-print. He saw to the conversion of the blacksmith shop—a floor was

put in,<sup>30</sup> other modifications made to transform it into an editor's print shop and boudoir. By February all was prepared, and on February 7, 1884, the first issue of Packard's paper emerged from a sometime blacksmith shop into the dusty streets of Medora and Little Missouri:

BAD LANDS COW BOY,

By A.T. Packard

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THE COW BOY is not published for fun, but for \$2 per year.  
 Advertising Rates made known on application.  
 Standing Advertisements payable quarterly.  
 Transient Advertisements and all Job work, money in sight.  
 Address all communications to  
 THE BAD LANDS COW BOY,  
 Medora, Dakota.

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#### INTRODUCTORY.

Unlike ninety-nine hundredths of the papers which have been started in the United States we do not come to fill a long-felt want. The cattle business here, though already of gigantic proportions, is still in its infancy in point of time. We do not come to observe a great moral end. Another field would have been more congenial. We do not come as the agent or tool of any man or set of men. There is a wide field for us to cover, and we intend to cover it. We do come, however, to make some almighty dollars.

There is nothing like honesty, and now that we have come out thus plainly our motives cannot be impeached. But to fulfill our mission we must publish a good paper. We will not even be satisfied with this. Only when every one will acknowledge that ours is the best cattle paper in the Northwest will we be satisfied. . . .

In politics we are Republican clear through to the backbone, and will continue to be so as long as

that party continues to merit the esteem of all fair-thinking men. Our allegiance to the Republican party is not such, however, as to blind us to its faults. In politics, as in all else, we will be free and out-spoken in our opinions. Whenever we see a wrong committed we will struggle with all our feeble might to have it righted.

To sum up, we intend to publish the best paper we can, sparing no expense in that direction, for we are confident that it will be "as bread cast upon the waters." It will return before many days in the shape of those same almighty dollars of which we have previously spoken.

These invigorating images of God and Mammon oddly enough combine to give the impression of an editor utterly independent and outspoken, of one who would doubtless speak nothing but the bone-solid truth even if he didn't believe that the roads to truth and almighty dollars were identical. There were many, however, who doubted that Packard was quite so free and outspoken as he pretended, and who believed he was actually in the pay of the Marquis de Morès—or at least greatly under his influence. This was a natural suspicion in view of the fact that the Marquis owned the town which Packard so enthusiastically touted, and that the two men had numerous business relations over the years. Packard "was a great mixer and a pretty good sort upon the whole," according to Lincoln Lang, "but he got lined up with the de Morès crowd and had to run his paper for their benefit, so that the other side of the story never appeared."<sup>31</sup>

Lang, a boy of sixteen when he came with his father to the Bad Lands, had arrived seven months before Packard.<sup>32</sup> But the Lang ranch lay fifty miles south of town,<sup>33</sup> and the elder Lang, a fiesty Scot, never cottoned much to the Marquis or his schemes. So young Lincoln was neither a very close nor an altogether impartial observor of Packard's relations with de Morès. Nonetheless, others evidently shared his view, for Packard in his third issue felt called upon to deny implications that he might be a paid hack:

To make the matter perfectly plain, we wish to repeat what we said in our salutatory. We are not the tool of nor are we beholden in any way to any man or set of men. Our whole outfit was purchased and our paper is edited and published by and in the interest of A. T. Packard. Marquis de Mores is the heaviest advertiser as his interests are the largest here and he will reap the greatest benefit through our publication. Beyond this he has no interest whatever. We are fighting here for our own interests and wish it distinctly understood that we alone are personally responsible for every article that appears in our columns.<sup>34</sup>

Packard was twenty-three,<sup>35</sup> the Marquis twenty-five.<sup>36</sup> Both were well-educated, both excellent athletes, both interested in politics, both concerned about the future of the Bad Lands. It would not have been surprising had they been drawn to each other. And Packard did on some occasions have dinner at the chateau on the hill. And his print shop stood only a few hundred feet from the Marquis' company

office, which was quite convenient for de Morès, who from time to time liked to come dashing into the Cow Boy with a new scheme in mind and in his hand another news article about himself—which Packard most often flung directly into the wastebasket.<sup>37</sup> They saw a good deal of each other. But if the Marquis was charming and ingenuous and full of enthusiasms, he was also far too intoxicated with his own birthright and his own grand plans to become very close to Packard or to any other common mortal down in the dusty town. He remained an aristocrat, a man at once extremely interested in frontier life and extremely tolerant of it, but aloof from it. "He was not a participant in any of the hilarity and I never saw him take a drink except wine with his meals," said Packard. "He believed it was all a part of frontier life, however. Except for his factotum, William Van Driesche, he had no real confidant. I think I came next in his esteem until the time of our final disagreement, but I never felt that he even considered me as a friend."<sup>38</sup>

Inevitably, of course, Packard's interests were largely identical not only with those of the Marquis, but with those of most everyone else in the Bad Lands who wanted a business boom in the Little Missouri country. And just here lay a problem: he could not easily criticize those with whom he

was working in the great common cause. In fact, in this respect he'd have far less difficulty reporting truthfully the activities of the Marquis, than those of certain other Bad Lands citizens who, while working hard to further the best interests of Medora (and themselves), were also crooks even by lax frontier standards.

Put another way, Packard's problem was that in every issue of the Cow Boy he faced two opposite directions. He wrote, on the one hand, as a boomer, at least to the extent that he was intent not to bring news of the world to Medora, but news of Medora to the world (good news, preferably). He wrote, on the other hand, as a reformer, intent to expose local deficiencies in order to urge their remedy. The two aims were nearly always somewhat contradictory. The one depended on sketching a mostly appealing picture of the town, the other in pointing out the flaws in the local scene. These aims, in a country of howling winters, bawling cattle, pistol shots, and tall talk of a tall future, gave rise to the four major themes which would recur in the pages of the Cow Boy as the months and years went by. In his premier issue Packard touched upon all four of these themes.

First, he maintained that the weather in the Bad Lands was perfectly healthy for men and beasts:

Last night was one of the most beautiful ever seen, even in this country. It did not seem cold at all. No one wore overcoats, but everyone was comfortable. Even to our citizens it will doubtless be the greatest surprise to learn that the thermometer all the evening was not higher than 26 degrees below. Not a breath of air was stirring, the moon shone beautifully from a perfectly clear sky and it was a positive pleasure to be out of doors.

Dakota was not so cold as everyone believed, the winters not so hard as they seemed from a distance. The pages of the Cow Boy would refer to this fatal theme in many ways in months and years to come. The cattle business—and thus the economic future of the area—depended upon favorable weather, which made this the most fundamental issue of all.

Second, Packard argued that the opportunities for raising cattle in the Bad Lands were unmatched anywhere in the world:

In no other place are there to be found so many favorable conditions for the raising of stock. Bunch and buffalo grass cover almost every inch of the ground. The raw sides of buttes are the only places where splendid grazing cannot be found. On many of the buttes, however, the grass grows clear to the summit, the slopes being the favorite pasture lands of the cattle. Generally no hay need be cut as the grass cures standing, and keeps the cattle in as good condition all winter as if they were stall-fed. The only reason for putting up hay is to avoid a scarcity of feed in case of heavy snow. This very seldom happens, however, as very little snow falls in the Bad Lands.



The Cow Boy, as proclaimed by its name and as evidenced by the preponderance of articles which appeared in its pages, was first and foremost a livestock paper aimed at ranchers, capitalists, and anyone interested in growing prosperous with the cattle industry. Because Packard was an admitted tenderfoot so far as cattle were concerned, most of his technical livestock articles were drawn from other publications. It was in dealing with the political aspects of ranching that he was most original and most effective.

Third, Packard urged that both the cattlemen and the county ought to organize for the mutual protection of all ranchers and citizens, and he stoutly maintained that lawlessness ought to be dealt with promptly and severely:

We are glad to see that Mr. Howard Eaton has taken the initiative in the one thing that is now most important to our cattle men. We refer to the subject of a cattle organization. In another column will be found the call for a meeting. This is a matter of vital interest to every stock man of the Bad Lands. Subjects continually come up that should be settled by the vote of the majority of our cattle men. At present there is no organization, and each man must decide all questions for himself. . . .

The county was not organized and there were no law enforcement officials closer than Mandan. As a practical matter, the law in force was six-gun law—that is, each man defended his own rights as he saw them, With more and more

herds and men moving into the area, Packard and certain others saw that disputes and conflicts would inevitably increase, and that these could best be resolved and forestalled by formation of a cattlemen's organization which could establish policy for roundups, strays, water rights, and all matters of mutual interest to the ranchers. He also saw that this first step toward political order should be followed as quickly as possible by organization of the county, which was even more important if the Bad Lands were to attract a prosperous and thriving community. Packard ultimately would deserve more credit than any other individual for the organization of the cattlemen and the organization of Billings county, but neither of these tasks would be easy. He'd be surprised how many ranchers preferred a situation in which "each man must decide all questions for himself," and how many citizens, due to the peculiar nature of their business activities, preferred a free and easy life with no sheriff closer than a hundred and thirty miles. This semi-lawless life was just what Packard ever stood against, arguing, even in his first issue, that lawlessness ought to be dealt with promptly and severely:

Several of Marquis' ponies were stolen from Matthew's camp a few days ago. Up to last accounts the thieves had not been overtaken, but they probably

will be. This is the first horse-stealing case for a long time in the Bad Lands, and the thieves, if caught, should be so dealt with as to discourage any further pleasantry of this sort.

Before summer was out Packard would become more specific as to how he thought such pleasantries should be discouraged, saying that he wished "to be placed on record as believing that the only way to cure horse-stealing is to hang the thief wherever caught."<sup>39</sup> A harsh view, perhaps, but whether a harsher view than circumstances required is not so easily answered. Many reasonable men have felt lynch law to be at least slightly preferable to no law whatever. Packard was later to have doubts about lynch law, when the vigilantes known as the Montana Stranglers began their work, but he would always be vociferous against lawbreaking. Among other things, he would wage a lonely and very unpopular campaign against the carrying of six-guns, and against drunkenness as an excuse for criminal outrages. He would also serve as Medora's first lawman, elected at a citizens' meeting to give his "personal attention to the subject of good order."<sup>40</sup>

Fourth, Packard sang the boomer theme, proclaiming from the outset that his town was already a safe and pleasant place to live, and an excellent place for businesses of all kinds:

From the articles in some of our exchanges it would seem that about the only live topic their editors had was that of lying about Little Missouri. All sorts of stories are being published, the mildest ones implying that Little Missouri is a den of thieves and cutthroats. How this idea got about we are at a loss to understand. There has been but one attempted robbery here, and that one was perpetrated by a tramp, who was discovered in the act and ordered to leave town immediately, which he did. Far from being the hardest town, Little Missouri is as peaceful a one as can be found on the Northern Pacific. If our exchanges would have the manhood to publish articles in reference to Little Missouri which are made up from facts alone it will show that they have a regard for the truth which is more commendable than common among them.

The truth of Packard's assertions in this paragraph may depend heavily upon the ambiguous and suggestive phrase "as peaceful a one as can be found on the Northern Pacific." It is certainly true that Little Missouri, deservedly or not, had a reputation for doing unpleasant things to people. Even children there could be very ornery. In the early days, before Packard arrived, Gerry Paddock's son liked to entertain himself by shooting at the feet of conductors on the Express. This same boy, Merit by name, worked in the hotel dining room, and on one occasion when he was asked to serve a cup of tea (which was regarded as a drink fit only for fancy pants) he replied to his startled customer, "You God damned son of a bitch! You'll take coffee or I'll scald you!" On another occasion, in a fit of anger,

young Merit blazed away at Frank Moore's brother and brought him down with a bullet in the leg. He also shot at his own brother.<sup>41</sup> Merit died of smallpox<sup>42</sup> before his fifteenth birthday, but there were plenty of more mature ruffians around to keep alive Little Missouri's reputation as the roughest town on the Northern Pacific. According to Lincoln Lang, the place didn't improve as it grew prosperous, either. On the contrary, "Prior to the coming of De Mores it hadn't been so bad. Now, however, attracted by the scent of pickings emanating from his projected enterprises, human vultures were daily flocking to the feast. From all quarters they were making their appearance, prospective dive-keepers, prostitutes, crooked gamblers, and gunmen. Already the devil was busy putting the skids under the place, in preparation for its nose-dive into the brimstone befogged nether atmosphere common to frontier towns during their boom periods."<sup>43</sup> It was just this sort of view which Packard had to "put into perspective" in the Cow Boy.

Packard boomed the town not only by defending it against its accusers, of course, but by calling attention to its attractions, particularly its attractions for businessmen. Over the years he urged that Medora would be a good place to start a brick kiln, a shoe shop, a harness shop, a dairy, a butter and cheese factory, a tannery, and various other

businesses.<sup>44</sup> But most insistently of all he urged that Medora was the ideal town for a freight or stage business, arguing that it was the natural jumping off place for a transportation route from the Northern Pacific Railroad to the Black Hills. In his first issue he noted:

The new freight and mail route between here and Deadwood is all but an established fact. Pennell & Roberts and Marquis de Mores are the ones most prominently interested. . . . In a few days the company will be jn [sic] shape to contract for freight of all kinds and in any quantity. Teams are already here by which about 100,000 pounds of freight can be transported. This is a large undertaking, but Messrs. Pennell & Roberts are two of the oldest freighters in the West, and they are determined to make a success of it.

Apart from a prosperous cattle business, no single thing could contribute more directly to the economic prosperity of the town than its establishment as a transportation center for transshipment of goods and passengers—via wagon, stage, or railroad—to the prosperous mining district of Deadwood lying several hundred miles to the south, in the Black Hills. Only a few years ago the Hills had been sacred Indian country, but now the treaties had been broken by the whites, the Indians driven out in more or less the usual fashion, and the place of the Gods converted into a region of large cash profits. Each year huge quantities of gold

and silver were shipped out of the Black Hills, and huge quantities of food and supplies shipped in, mainly over the stage and wagon routes which ran south from Deadwood to Cheyenne and Sidney on the Union Pacific Railroad, east from Deadwood to Pierre at the terminus of the Chicago and Northwestern line, and northeast from Deadwood to Bismarck, on the Northern Pacific. But when the Northern Pacific pushed westward from Bismarck, new towns sprang up all along its line, and all of these lay closer to Deadwood than Bismarck did. The result was that some of these towns, particularly Medora and Dickinson, became anxious to establish routes of their own to the Hills, and they entered into competition not only with the old established routes, but with each other. This competition soon led to a booming "shoot-out" between Packard's Cow Boy and The Dickinson Press.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. Cow Boy, June 26, 1884.
2. Hermann Hagedorn, Roosevelt in the Bad Lands (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921), pp. 73 and 75-76.
3. Lincoln A. Lang, Ranching With Roosevelt (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1926), pp. 53-55.
4. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 5.
5. Lang, p. 53.
6. Lang, pp. 50-51.
7. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, pp. 74-75.
8. Echoing Trails, Billings County History (Medora, North Dakota: Billings County Historical Society, 1979), pp. 54-55.
9. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 22.
10. Lang, P. 48.
11. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, pp. 7-8.
12. Paddock unquestionably shot Livingston. That he also fired the shot which killed Riley Luffsey was often alleged, but never proved.
13. For a good review of the kind of publicity given at that time to the opportunities for livestock raising on the northern plains, see D. Jerome Tweton, The Marquis de Morès, Dakota Capitalist, French Nationalist (Fargo: North Dakota Institute For Regional Studies, 1972), pp. 3-14.
14. Carleton Putnam, Theodore Roosevelt, The Formative Years, 1858-1886 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 362.



15. North Dakota, A Guide to the Northern Prairie State, second edition. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 176.
16. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 75. Entire conversation is quoted. Also, see footnote on same page. I have found no reference anywhere else to Packard having participated in a lynching.
17. Hermann Hagedorn, Bad Lands Manuscript Draft (being one of three manuscript drafts for the book Roosevelt in the Bad Lands, in the Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Harvard College Library), p. 118. Hereafter cited as MsD.
18. Will Cumback and J. B. Maynard, editors, Men of Progress (Indianapolis: The Indianapolis Sentinel Company, 1899), pp. 594-596. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 76. Oberlin College Archives, records and documents relating to Arthur Thomas Packard and his sister Adelaide Packard. University of Michigan Alumni Records Office, records relating to Arthur Thomas Packard.
19. Hagedorn, MsD, p. 118.
20. The Bismarck Tribune (weekly), (Bismarck, Dakota Territory), the issue of Friday, October 26, 1883, on page 4, column 3, carries the following item:

The Mandan department of the Tribune is now under the charge of Mr. A. T. Packard, a young man of sterling worth who will doubtless make many friends both for himself and the Tribune. The Tribune branch office will be located at the center of town and the policy of the Mandan department will be to harmonize any conflicting sentiments between the two ends of town. The Tribune will be delivered to its Mandan subscribers as early after the arrival of the morning train as possible, and an effort will be made by the branch office to keep to the front on all matters affecting the growth and prosperity of the west side metropolis. Business men advertise in the Tribune because it is the only daily paper that reaches their customers west on the line of the railroad and the people will read the Tribune because it is a newspaper

publishing full telegraphic and market reports.

Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 75, has Packard moving to Mandan and going to work for the Mandan Pioneer. Either Packard worked for three newspaper offices in a very short time or Hagedorn was incorrect in writing that he worked for the Pioneer while in Mandan.

21. Hagedorn, MsD, p. 119.
22. Tweton, pp. 17-21.
23. Tweton, pp. 22-24.
24. Tweton, p. 69.
25. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 61.
26. Putnam, p. 352.
27. Hermann Hagedorn, Bad Lands Notes (consisting of 10 volumes of manuscript notes, made in preparation for Roosevelt in the Bad Lands, paged continuously 1-1113, plus unpagged material, in the Theodore Roosevelt Collection, Harvard College Library), p. 901. Hereafter cited as BLN.
28. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 76.
29. Cow Boy, February 7, 1884.
30. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 90.
31. Hagedorn, BLN, p. 542.
32. Lang, p. 48.
33. Lang, p. 81.
34. Cow Boy, February 21, 1884.
35. Death certificate of Arthur T. Packard (who died in Chicago, Illinois, January 16, 1931) in the files of the State of Illinois Department of Public Health, Division of Vital Statistics, Springfield, Illinois. Packard was born May 25, 1860.

36. Tweton, p. 17. The Marquis de Morès was born June 14, 1858.
37. Hagedorn, BLN, p. 825, writes thus of the Marquis:  
"He was a seeker after notoriety and never could get enough publicity. He constantly came down to the office of the 'Cowboy' with stories about the Marquis de Mores, which Packard ruthlessly threw into the scrap-basket unless they happened to be of general public interest."
38. Hagedorn, BLN, pp. 901-901a. Packard gave Hagedorn the following rather unique interpretation of the Marquis' acquittal of the charge of murder:  

Our final disagreement was typical of the Marquis' mental attitude. He had plead guilty of the killing of Luffsey on the ground of self-defense, the suit being brought in Bismarck as we of course had no court. My testimony was that the Marquis could not have killed Luffsey, as the fatal bullet was of a different calibre from those the Marquis was shooting. The Marquis wanted to prove he had killed Luffsey and be discharged on the plea of self-defense. My testimony may have freed the Marquis as it proved he did not kill Luffsey. Hence our disagreement. After his release from a purely technical arrest in Bismarck he came back to Medora and straight to my office. As he entered he exclaimed: "I have killed one man and will kill another." I knew the Marquis carried his gun with the butt under his left arm pit and, grabbing up the ever-ready side-stick jumped to within striking distance and by words only, convinced the Marquis he was mistaken in both ends of his statement. I tried also to convince him that there were many things more important than adding another notch on his gun stock.
39. Cow Boy, July 24, 1884.
40. Cow Boy, May 14, 1885.
41. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, pp. 53-54.
42. Echoing Trails, p. 563.

43. Lang, p. 78.
44. Cow Boy, February 7, May 15, November 13, and December 18, 1884; April 16 and April 30, 1885.

## III. Boomer

A boomer is a liar every time.

The Bad Lands Cow Boy<sup>1</sup>

Thirty-five miles to the east of Packard's blacksmith shop, in the rolling hills of the short grass prairie, lay Dickinson, a small town where for the past eleven months Joseph T. Scott had been publishing The Dickinson Press. Scott flew the following notice at his masthead:

The Dickinson Press belongs to the undersigned and will be published every Saturday, Providence permitting, for the best interests of its patrons, the glory of Dickinson and \$2.50 per year. It cannot be bought, frightened or used as a hack, but will try and give every person their just dues, always remembering that a citizen of Dickinson or Stark County is better than anybody else.

Jos. T. Scott

Scott hadn't been terribly exercised over the freight route question prior to the appearance of the Cow Boy, though of course he'd mentioned the matter from time to time. The

previous September, for instance, he'd reported in his columns that a committee in Dickinson had been appointed to communicate to officials of the Northern Pacific railroad, as well as to merchants of St. Paul and Deadwood, that Dickinson would put into good shape half the road from Dickinson to Deadwood if freight arrangements could be made with the railroad. He'd also predicted that by the first of October a freight route would be established between Dickinson and the Black Hills which would go far toward making Dickinson "the booming banner city of the West Missouri country." But not until December did the first Hills-bound freight shipment actually arrive in Dickinson, and it was several weeks later that the Press announced that someone had been appointed to discuss freight contracts with the merchants of Deadwood.

During this early period Scott was generally complimentary toward the settlement on the Little Missouri. Occasionally he carried a column of news from there. And he remarked the rapid growth of the place, saw success for the Marquis' efforts to make it a stock raising center,<sup>2</sup> and even reported without sarcasm the Marquis' new cabbage enterprise:

The Marquis de Mores has a novel enterprise under way, which he is confident will prove a success, it being a plan to raise 50,000 cabbages on his ranch

at the Little Missouri, and have them ready for the market April 1. They will be raised under glass in some peculiar French manner, and when they have attained a certain size, will be transplanted into individual pots and forced rapidly by rich fertilizers, made from the offal of the slaughter houses, and for which preparation he owns the patent. Should the cabbages come out on time he will try his hand on other kinds of vegetables and should he succeed the citizens along the line will have an opportunity to get as early vegetables as those who live in the sunny south.<sup>3</sup>

But when the long shadow of the Cow Boy fell across the land, the enthusiasm of The Dickinson Press for its Bad Lands neighbor cooled considerably. Just two days after Packard's first issue came off the press, Scott felt called upon to observe that "the talk of a road from Little Missouri amounts to nothing as freighters could never be induced to haul a second load of goods through thirty miles of Bad Lands, which are what their name indicates, nothing but deep ravines and the roughest kind of hills and buttes through which it would be almost impossible to make a road."<sup>4</sup> This must have seemed to Scott simple common sense. Yet it is probable that he and his fellow citizens were uneasy when they learned that the Marquis de Morès had gone to Washington to see about a mail contract from Medora to Deadwood, for it was common knowledge that the Marquis had millions at his back. And might not the building of a freight road through difficult country be relatively small potatoes to a

man who had already undertaken to revolutionize the beef business while at the same time growing fifty thousand cabbages under glass?

Scott's anxieties were doubtless also fueled by Packard's certainty about the outcome of Medora's freight efforts. Packard evinced calm confidence in his second issue:

A quiet smile percolated about our features when we read an article in the Dickinson Press in reference to the stage and mail route from that point being the assured one to the Black Hills and that no other route would be established. In the light of the report brought back by Mr. Roberts it seems that almost no effort has been made toward establishing a route from Dickinson and the one from this point is almost an assured fact. The route from here for almost the entire distance is as good a wagon road as could be desired, water and grass also being abundant. In the winter season almost a perfect route is furnished by the Little Missouri river. It will be news to many to know that Medora is not over three miles east of a line running directly north from Deadwood. The proposed route from this place scarcely goes off of this line, thus making this the nearest rail-road point to Deadwood. At no place on the route is there any considerable obstacle to be overcome. The road will need almost no grading and but few bridges. There is but very little gumbo, the route only crossing a narrow strip. The Dickinson route on the other hand, strikes gumbo from the start and there is a great quantity all along their line. . . .<sup>5</sup>

During the following week Packard grew still more confident. In the proleptic style which often made him seem



more augur than reporter, he stated in his third issue that "all indications and recent developments point to a speedy opening of the freight route between this point and Deadwood. It is now almost as good as a settled fact." He went on to elaborate the gumbo problems of the proposed Dickinson route, asserting that all along the Moreau to Minnesala was "one vast bed of gumbo" to which there was no bottom and in which wagons would "mire over the axles," and he also noted that at present it was impossible even to ride a horse over part of the route due to numerous great cracks into which a horse was in constant danger of stepping and breaking its legs. At this point his article broke off—he stopped press to insert two telegrams just received from the Marquis in Washington, D.C., one telegram sent (characteristically) as an exuberant afterthought to the other:

"Mail route and county organization, o.k."

Marquis de Mores.

"Tell Pennell to organize three or four post offices at ranches on road to Deadwood and send applications directly." Marquis de Mores.<sup>6</sup>

Scott had shown some reluctance to do direct battle with the Cow Boy, but this blast smoked him out into the

open, and he was forced to defend himself the following Saturday:

The Cow Boy is evidently not acquainted with the country when it says that "the Dickinson route strikes gumbo from the start and there is a great quantity all along the line." This causes the "smile to percolate about our features," as it is a well known fact substantiated by all the hunters with whom we have talked and who know all the country south and west of here, that the Dickinson road is the shortest, best and more free from gumbo than any other road to the Hills. From our experience in the "bad lands" we know that after a slight rain a man can carry a whole quarter section off on his boots, and we don't wear over number twelves either. . . . We smile again when the voice of the Cow Boy is heard from the heart of the "bad lands" echoing through the canyons and reverberating from butte to butte that the Dickinson route, which is almost as level as a floor, "is at best a poor one and at certain seasons almost impassible." The Cow Boy is young, and, like the boy going through a graveyard at night, is whistling to keep up courage. However, we hope it may live to outgrow this and become a representative of the vast stock interests of the "bad lands" on which Little Missouri must depend for her prosperity.<sup>7</sup>

The following week the Cow Boy reported that the Medora road had been staked out to the level ridge east of the Little Missouri valley, and that only one place had been found where teams would need to be doubled—a defect to be remedied by grading. Then Packard received information which he believed put the matter beyond all question, and on March 6, 1884, he pulled out every trick in his type case and

began to whoop and crow:

"Hold Me While I Larf!"

large engraving  
of a rooster  
crowing

SING, BROTHERS, SING!

---

Where, oh where is the Dickinson Freight Route?  
Where, oh where is the Dickinson Freight Route?  
Where, oh where is the Dickinson Freight Route?  
Sunk, now, in a gumbo slough!

---

More 'Whistling to Keep Up Courage.'

Dispatches from St. Paul state that Messrs. Pennell and Jones have signed contracts for 17,000,000 pounds of freight from Chicago, St. Paul and Minneapolis via Little Missouri crossing to the Black Hills. Jones will put on seventy-five teams, Pennell forty-five and Larson forty as a starter. . . .

We wonder if our citizens fully realize what the success of this route means. It means success for the town and every person in it. It means a large number of new citizens. It means new houses and new stores. It means one of the largest circulating mediums of any town on the line. . . .

The Cow Boy was published every Thursday, the Press every Saturday, and this meant Scott had very little time to regroup his arguments in order to defend himself against Packard's attacks each week. One can but imagine Joseph Scott's frame of mind each Thursday afternoon or Friday morning as he walked to the Dickinson depot to get his

latest copy of the Cow Boy and learn what new charge of freightshot Packard had fired in his direction, to which he must compose a hurried reply:

. . . the Bad Lands Cow Boy at once jumps to the conclusion that this freight will all go to Little Missouri for transportation and hoists a great big bob tailed rooster at the head of its columns crowing over the supposed victory Medora has won. We are not alarmed at all by this, as the Northern Pacific has already established special rates to Dickinson on Black Hills freight and a large amount has already arrived here, some of which is now on the road to Deadwood . . . .<sup>8</sup>

The contradictory claims by the two papers cannot be blamed entirely on the boomer instincts of the editors. For several reasons it was not altogether easy to ascertain the relative merits of the Dickinson and Medora routes in respect to mud, distance, rates, or any of the other characteristics of interest to freighters. First, neither road had been put into its final, improved form. Second, whoever travelled the roads for the purpose of comparing them would be travelling them only at one season, while the question was how good they were at all seasons. Third, measurement with an odometer was necessary if the mileage question were to be settled with certainty. Fourth, the man who passed judgment on the merits of the roads would

need to be unconnected with either Medora or Dickinson or any other town with a freight route, if his judgment were to be trusted.

As a matter of fact, the unprejudiced man with the odometer would soon appear. Meanwhile, the freight route issue was confused by the Byzantine machinations of various freighters, railroad agents, businessmen, and land boomers, all of whom were vying for their own best piece of the Deadwood trade, and many of whom were willing to tell any lie or break any contract to get it. John Cranston was appointed agent for the Medora route but quickly turned traitor to his employers—among whom were the Marquis, Bob Roberts, Joseph Pennell, and Mr. Jones—and tried to sell out to the Pierre route. According to the Cow Boy, Cranston's scheme was fortunately nipped in the bud, "and only the intervention of friends of Mr. Jones kept the latter from putting Cranston's skin in a very leaky condition with a six-shooter. . . ." <sup>9</sup> Then there was Dennis Bramble, of the firm of Kyes and Bramble, who proved even more of a problem. Bramble was willing to switch allegiance to any town where he could turn a quick wagonful of money, even to Belfield, a small community which lay between Dickinson and Medora and which never had a real chance to capture the freight business to the Hills. Bramble's "funny work" began when

Dickinson "offered a bonus to the firm of Kyes & Bramble to do their forwarding from there. Immediately after this offer was made," wrote Packard, "the firm came to Medora and tried to secure an advance in blood-money from here. Their errand was profitless as no one would even enter into negotiations with them and they left town on a freight train swearing that they would never come here again, that they were sorry for even the amount they had laid out for dinner and they afterwards declared to Bob. Roberts that: 'the Marquis and the whole d— French army couldn't drag them to Medora.'"<sup>10</sup> Eventually Bramble and Kyes would accept Dickinson's offer, then double-cross Dickinson and receive a large bonus of Belfield land in return for touting the Belfield route.

With these and many other freighters and agents sending contradictory telegrams, making contracts, breaking contracts, switching allegiances from one route to the next, proclaiming first one route superior and then another, it is easy to understand not only how Packard and Scott might have had difficulty in ascertaining the "facts," but how, on the strength of reasonably good circumstantial evidence, they could have come to nearly any conclusion they cared to regarding the outcome of the race for Deadwood freight. The week following Scott's mild riposte to Packard's rooster

story, Packard ran the head "WE STILL 'LARF.'" and beneath it asserted, "Our citizens can now rest assured that in two weeks at the most the route will be in full operation." He professed surprise at having read in the latest copy of The Dickinson Press that a Dickinson citizens' committee had been formed to "view the road and estimate the cost of constructing the necessary bridges," and he observed:

This needs no comment. The first thing they ought to have done was to see whether they had a good all-weather route. The Dickinson freight route then dwindles down to the bare fact that "as soon as practicable" the route will be "viewed." Oh, Scotty, thou hast given thyself away.

The Press in another article tries to prove that Dickinson will be the end of the freight route. But what are arguments compared to the hard, cold fact that "We've got there, Eli." A fair exchange is no robbery, Bro. Scott. You take the argument and we take the cake.<sup>11</sup>

In this vein new editions of argument continued appearing, replete with metaphors which frequently sustained themselves for weeks and even months as they were flung back and forth between the two papers, and all the while Scott seemed to be struggling to maintain some semblance of a tone of reasoned discourse:

The Bad Lands Cow Boy was received too late for us to make a lengthy reply to his preposterous remarks

about the Black Hills freight line. He claims that the freight here is to be shipped to Little Missouri—this is not so. They have not received a pound of freight there while we have received several hundred thousand pounds here and sent eleven loaded freight outfits to the Black Hills this week.<sup>12</sup>

Packard now, at last, decided to look at the two routes in person, to reach a firsthand conclusion as to which was best. On Friday, March 21, he left Medora and headed for Dickinson, where he paid the Press a "very pleasant call."<sup>13</sup> He found Dickinson to be "a lively, bustling place, very well calculated to predispose anyone in its favor." With a friend he rode out several miles on the proposed Dickinson route. Though the ground was too frozen to allow final judgments, he made what observations he could and then he returned to the Bad Lands where, on the following day, he took a long trip into the buttes to examine the beginning of the Medora route. Based on these two investigative journeys he concluded that Dickinson's route showed evidence of "considerable gumbo grass and frequent indications of quicksand,"<sup>14</sup> that in the Bad Lands the Medora route was "on the whole, more level than the Dickinson route but there are more hills," and that "the first twenty-five miles of the Dickinson route is preferable to ours, if the gumbo can be avoided. Otherwise our twenty-five miles in the Bad Lands



are vastly preferable."<sup>15</sup> In short, he reached no substantial conclusion whatever.

The same day that Packard was riding amid the buttes examining the Medora route, Scott was putting out a chromo<sup>16</sup> edition:

VICTORY!

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DICKINSON WINS

---

The Black Hills Freight  
Line and Our Citi-  
zens are Jubilant.

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The Bob Tailed Rooster  
of The Bad Lands  
Cow Boy Pluck-  
ed by our No-  
ble Bird

engraving of  
one rooster pecking  
another into submission

And Left Bleeding and  
Torn Upon the Field  
Without a pound  
of Freight.

. . . The action of the railroads in fixing upon Dickinson as the railroad terminus of all Black Hills freight brings joy to our citizens and leaves Medora and Belfield out in the cold. It is a great victory for Dickinson and will be one of the leading factors in building up the town and pushing it to the front. It has been well known that Dickinson was the only point along the line from which a practicable freight road into the Black Hills could be built, but the Bad Lands Cow Boy has been trying to induce people to believe that a road could be built from Medora through the worst and roughest of the "bad lands." All his talk has failed to convince and Dickinson has "got thar, Eli," and the bird which flopped his wings in the columns of the Cow Boy, some two weeks since, and crowed over a supposed victory, has been plucked clean by our noble bird without rumpling a feather. The Cow Boy poet can now grind out another effusion on the Dickinson freight line, but he must remember that it is not now "Sunk in a gumbo slough."

During the past week about 200,000 pounds of Black Hills freight have arrived here and 100,000 pounds of it is now on the way to Deadwood.<sup>17</sup>

During April and May Packard ran a column of Dickinson Notes written by "Anthropos," his own correspondent living in Dickinson. Whether this was a gesture toward journalistic fairness, a ploy to sell the Cow Boy in Dickinson, a means of getting reliable information from the enemy camp, or perhaps all of these things, is not clear. In any case, readers of the Cow Boy must have been surprised to see certain of Anthropos's favorable comments regarding Dickinson, and unfavorable comments regarding Little Missouri, printed side by side with Packard's copy—comments

such as Dickinson promises to be a large shipping point for cattle, and Little Missouri indulges in more litigation than many larger places, and Freight continues to arrive for the Black Hills and is forwarded as rapidly as it comes. At the same time, Anthropol was not averse to criticizing Dickinson, and when he criticized a boomer advertisement in The Dickinson Press as being "a trifle too previous" in its statement that a thousand teams were presently employed on the Dickinson freight route, he quickly became embroiled in a slinging match with the editor of the Press. Soon Packard jumped into the fray on behalf of his correspondent, and this started the following dialogue between the Cow Boy and the Press concerning booming, ethics, and grammar, which took place over a stretch of weeks—

COW BOY: There is such a thing as legitimate booming, but it should not be confounded with downright lying. Our correspondent had the interests of Dickinson at heart when he took exception to the senseless statement of the advertisement. Its purpose was certainly to gain settlers for Dickinson. Suppose it succeeded in getting them there, who can doubt that they would be utterly disgusted at the outset. Our correspondent was exactly right when he said: "The simple truth about this country when it becomes known, will bring men and means to develop it quite as rapidly as is consistent with a healthy growth."<sup>18</sup>

PRESS: One of our western exchanges moralizes about legitimate booming. Coming from the source it does the joke is highly appreciated.<sup>19</sup>

COW BOY: The whole of Dakota is and has been cursed with a set of men who make "booming" their livelihood. Every settler who is misled by their false statements should be able to and we think can sue and recover damages. A boomer is a liar every time. If a man comes to Dakota with enough money to get a start and a willingness to work as hard as he would east, he can do no better than to come. There are fortunes for that kind of men. For men who expect to make money easier here than they could in the east we have no use. They are a clog on the rest and are the class of easily discouraged men who do far more harm than good. Happy Dakota and happy west when the boomer is no more in the land!<sup>20</sup>

PRESS: The Bad Lands Cow Boy last week, intimated broadly that we were lacking in a first class article of veracity. We do not like to intimate any such thing of the editor of that sheet, but when he makes such statements, when speaking of Black Hills freight, as this: "Not a pound of freight will be shipped from any point on the Northern Pacific R.R., except from Medora," as he does in this week's issue, we feel that the angels must weep at the sad condition of his conceptions of truth. We know that the truth is contrary to his statement and believe that he, also, knows it it.<sup>21</sup>

COW BOY: An editor who perverts the meaning of another is as guilty as one who steals articles without giving proper credit. In last week's issue we used the words, "There is now no doubt that every pound of Black Hills freight will be shipped via Medora," meaning the words, as every sensible person can see, by the use of the word "will" to apply to the future, say a week or two hence. The present editor of The Dickinson Press, with a bungling use of tenses says: "The truth is contrary to his statement," meaning that it is not the truth at the present time. If the editor pro tem will go back to "first principles" and brush up his grammar he will see that he has either misstated himself or that he has said what he knows every one even in Dickinson believes to be false.<sup>22</sup>

PRESS: Bro. Packard must study his grammar at arms length in a pair of tongs to arrive at such a conclusion.<sup>23</sup>

Packard's enthusiastic versions of the future often proved false, but he prided himself on his accuracy in stating the facts upon which these fearless prognostications were based. He was generally quite accurate when dealing with past events and matters of established knowledge, and was lightning quick to point out factual errors made by his confreres—for he by no means restricted himself to taking shots at The Dickinson Press. He corrected the Latin of the Spearfish Register,<sup>24</sup> the zoology of the Glendive Times,<sup>25</sup> the geography of the St. Paul Globe.<sup>26</sup> He was always ready to philosophize on the boomer question, and when the Glendive Times demanded his retraction and apology for having stated that the range near Glendive was in bad shape, Packard not only refused to apologize but gave Bro. Mabee the lie direct, and then lectured him on the ethics of boomer journalism:

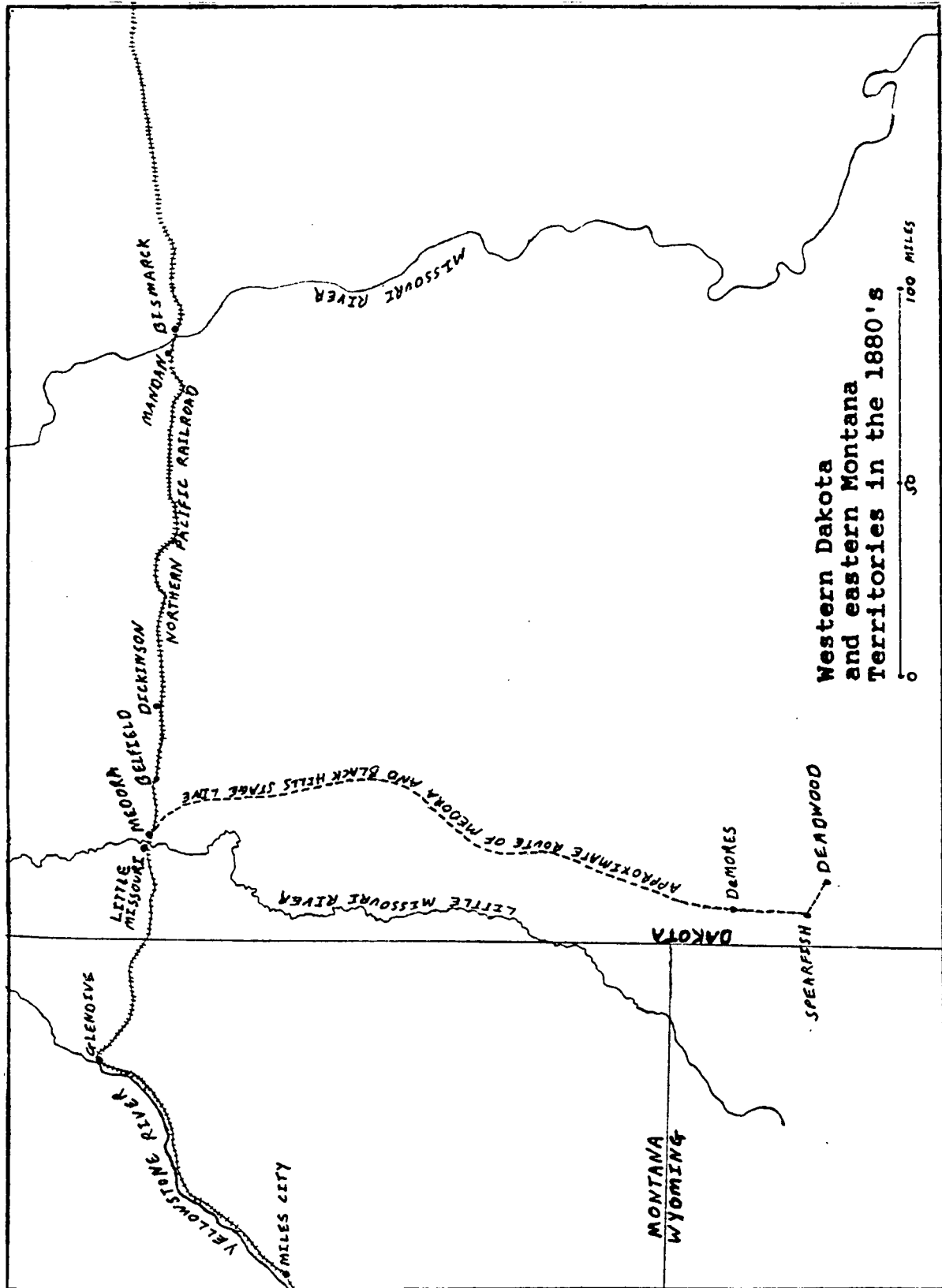
That he [Bro. Mabee] does not know better, would be to say that he keeps himself entirely aloof from his fellow-man and is entirely unacquainted with the commonest topic of conversation. It is so perfectly well-known that the ranges in many parts of eastern Montana are absolutely ruined for this year, that the veriest school-boy could have acquainted him with

the fact. This leads us to remark that stock journals as a rule, make a constant habit of covering up the losses and extolling the profits in the cow business. This is all wrong. It harms everyone interested and makes the wise reader suspicious of the paper and leads the ignorant one astray. For instance, there is not a Montana reader of the last Glendive Times, but that knows the article referred to was pure buncombe, while it might induce outsiders to put in cattle where an Indian pony would starve.<sup>27</sup>

Packard did not consider himself a boomer except in the "legitimate" sense, and he wrote a number of other pieces on the evils of booming, one of which concluded as follows:

We never have and never will claim anything for Medora that we do not believe is absolutely and unqualifiedly true. We don't want a boomed town and won't have it as long as "the voice of the COW BOY reverberates from butte to butte," as a sap-headed contemporary puts it. "Legitimate growth" is our path to prosperity.<sup>28</sup>

During the first week of May the Medora-Deadwood route was finally opened to business. Pennell and Roberts' outfit pulled for the Hills with 70,000 pounds of freight. A week later Smith and Graham's outfit of nine wagons and thirty-six mules followed Pennell and Roberts' tracks into the buttes, and a week after that Ford's outfit loaded 120,000 pounds and did likewise. Then "Arkansas John"



turned up, having deserted the Pierre route, and he went on record in the Cow Boy as saying that the road from Medora to the Black Hills was the best road he'd ever travelled in twenty-six years of freighting.<sup>29</sup> May and June were booming months for the Medora freight business. But already Packard was looking beyond freight wagons, beyond even the stage line, and was publishing articles concerning the railroad which he was certain must eventually connect Medora and the Hills. In early June he reprinted an article from the Black Hills Pioneer which reported that work on the new railroad from Deadwood to Medora would start in a matter of days.<sup>30</sup> The stage line, meanwhile, had become so widely regarded as a fait accompli that on June 25 two men got off the train at Medora intending to take one of the Marquis' stages to the Hills, and were surprised to learn that the line didn't exist.<sup>31</sup> Not a single coach or horse had yet been purchased. The public was similarly misled on several other occasions, and no doubt Packard was to some degree responsible for such misunderstandings. The Press had this to say about the Cow Boy's unfounded optimism:

"Arrangements are now completed and stages will be running on the Medora and Deadwood line in two weeks." This item has appeared in the Bad Lands Cow Boy almost every week for the past two months. Mark it tf. Bro. Packard.<sup>32</sup>



On Monday, the thirtieth of June, 1884, Packard entrusted his editorial duties to Rassie Deffebach—the first time he'd let the Cow Boy out of his hands—and started for Deadwood over the road about which he'd written so much. He intended to view the entire route and to tour the "metropolis of the Hills." He left at five o'clock in the afternoon from the new Medora brickyard.<sup>33</sup> Riding with him in a buckboard drawn by a pair of Pennell and Roberts' boss mules were P. D. Cravath, who was an old college friend, and Patrick Devlin, who handled the reins. They jiggled up to the divide and south into the Bad Lands, and several hours later they went into an early camp. Their first night of wilderness was not entirely comfortable. They were awakened at three o'clock in the morning by a drizzling cold rain. They got up, struggled long to light their fire. At last they cooked their coffee, bolted it hot and straight in the blackness, and then started south through a cold down-pour which made Packard thankful for his rubber coat. By eight in the morning the rain had begun to slack, but the weather remained cold.

At 46.1 miles from Medora the cold Cow Boy ink-slinger and his friends overtook Lieutenant Varnum and his government survey outfit. The Lieutenant had been ordered by the Army to locate the best route from Fort Meade, near Deadwood, to

the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Both the Cow Boy and the Press had duly reported this undertaking. Already the lieutenant had surveyed the Dickinson route. When Packard and his companions overtook him, Lieutenant Varnum was pleased to show them how his odometer worked, and they all chatted pleasantly for a time. Then the three companions left Varnum and his detail to their toil, and travelled on in the coldness.

They travelled three days through cold, 130 degree heat, boredom, and hail that pummelled them black and blue despite the blanket they hid under, and at five o'clock on the evening of July 3 they arrived, literally weather-beaten, at the top of the final butte. Suddenly before them lay the valley of the Belle Fourche, dotted with farms and small towns: here was stark frontier, where at a bend in the road civilization vanishes for days, where utter stillness of buttes intensifies the sound of an opening window in main street, where rain gives meaning to roofs, where civilization is no abstraction but tangible and clear and suggestive as a lone ranch light seen in the blackness of prairie, where progress is no vague ideal but felt in the bone, felt as distinctly as the difference between hard earth, a canvas cot at the Pyramid Park Hotel, and "the splendid luxury of a spring bed" in the Spearfish House.

During his journey to Deadwood Packard's mind was sharply attuned to the possibilities for progress, civilization, commerce. As he passed the new town of De Mores he judged it to have a "good fighting chance to become one of the best towns near the Hills." He was impressed with Spearfish (where they spent that night and the Fourth of July) because it was filled with "wide-awake" businessmen and surrounded by agricultural lands covered with ditches of magnificent spring water. On July fifth he and his companions rolled along toward Deadwood in one of Dr. Spear's stages, and Packard sat on the box with Hank Monk, "a fit descendent of the original and a regular encyclopedia of information," and all of them made the hills ring with "Hark, I hear a voice, way up in the mountain top" and other college songs. As they rolled along Packard speculated on the value of the passing gypsum beds, noted the deep red color of the streams caused by pulverized quartz dumped from the Homestake mine, remarked the fine building qualities of the passing hard pine forests. Soon they encountered their first miners—three Chinamen sluicing, who told them that in a day they could take out "sometime six bittee, sometime dollah hap, when dig like hellee." And a moment later Deadwood burst into view.

Packard found the "Metropolis of the Hills" a startling

example of what a town could become in only eight years. It had handsome brick buildings. Every place of business was "brilliantly illuminated with electric lights." It had two newspapers. It had amenities and commodities sufficient to satisfy "the most particular dude of New York." It had a telephone system extending to every town in the Hills. All this Packard viewed with more than a tourist's interest, for in a remote but very real way he was a part of it—or about to become so. According to his calculations, Medora lay only 185 miles north, making it the nearest railroad point to Deadwood, and he was keenly aware that "every solitary article that could not be manufactured in the Hills, had to be shipped this distance or a greater one, on wagons."

While in Deadwood Packard was squired about by Dolph Edwards, editor of the Black Hills Pioneer. Edwards proved a delightful and knowledgeable host. He arranged for Packard to tour the extensive and elaborate mining operations which were the basis of Deadwood's prosperity, and he thoroughly versed the Cow Boy editor in the history of the town, the history of the Hills. Packard also learned a good deal, while in Deadwood, about the machinations of the perfidious Bramble.

Bramble had been hired (very unwisely, in view of his past record) as a representative for the Medora route in

Deadwood. But, true to form, he'd turned traitor, and for three weeks previous to Packard's arrival he'd been working "like a beaver convincing merchants that the Belfield route was the best one and inducing many to sign contracts via that point." Packard was outraged. When he returned to Medora the second week in July, he promptly published a long apopemptic article documenting the dirty work of Bramble, running it under the headline "VALE, BRAMBLE!" to signify that the freighters were "on to" Bramble's "funny work" and that the thorn in Medora's side would soon have "handled his last pound of freight over the Northern Pacific" and would be seen no more in these parts.<sup>34</sup>

But the same week that Packard returned from Deadwood, Scott was publishing what would prove to be as close to the final word on the freight route question as anyone would write. And it was this:

Numerous passengers have stopped at Medora to take the stage line to the Hills but, of course, had to be informed that the thing was only mythical, and had to either hire a team and driver or go to some point where stages were running. The much talked of and blowed about freight route is also now a thing of the past and will only exist hereafter in the balderdash of the Marquis and the Cow Boy editor. We believe, and have good reasons for so doing, that in the end Dickinson will be the only town on the Northern Pacific from which Black Hills freight will be shipped. Lieut. Varnum, the government surveyor, who has been over the three routes says that the Dickinson route is the best

and will so report to General Terry. The Mandan Pioneer, in speaking of the freight question, suggests that a plain unvarnished statement from the Bad Lands Cow Boy will be acceptable and interesting. They're tumbling to your racket, Bro. Packard. Ring down the curtain on the Medora freight route drama.<sup>35</sup>

Lieutenant Varnum's report to the Army showed that Dickinson lay about 197 miles from Deadwood, Medora about 214 miles. In this report the Lieutenant concluded that the Medora route was "not so well adapted for freighting purposes as the Dickinson route, it being considerably longer and not so well supplied with wood."<sup>36</sup> This conclusion, not officially published till October but widely circulated as soon as he'd finished his surveys, was perhaps the most important immediate factor leading to the decline of Medora's freight route. Of the more fundamental reasons for the route's failure, the most fatal was probably simple distance. Neither the Marquis' money nor the booming of the Cow Boy could shorten the road by seventeen miles, a full day's journey in a loaded wagon.<sup>37</sup>

Traffic over the route didn't collapse immediately. The Marquis' freight house was duly completed and the new year would still find freight outfits pulling for the Hills from Medora. But most of the big outfits deserted the route by the end of the summer of 1884, and thereafter the bulk of Deadwood freight went via the Dickinson and Pierre routes.

This was a disappointment for Medora, but far from a crippling blow. The town was full of money, full of energetic young men, full of exuberant plans. Plans for a stage line, for instance. The Marquis was determined to get the stage line running—and when he did it would be one of the few in the west to be managed by a newspaper editor.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. Cow Boy, April 24, 1884.
2. The Dickinson Press (Dickinson, Dakota Territory), September 22 and December 29, 1883.
3. Dickinson Press, January 5, 1884.
4. Dickinson Press, February 16, 1884.
5. Cow Boy, February 14, 1884.
6. Cow Boy, February 21, 1884.
7. Dickinson Press, February 23, 1884.
8. Dickinson Press, March 8, 1884.
9. Cow Boy, March 13, 1884.
10. Cow Boy, July 17, 1884.
11. Cow Boy, March 13, 1884.
12. Dickinson Press, March 15, 1884.
13. Dickinson Press, March 22, 1884: "A. T. Packard, the genfal editor of the Bad Lands Cow Boy spent Friday in town. He made the Press a very pleasant call."
14. "The Bad Lands Cow Boy speaks of 'gumbo grass,'" replied The Dickinson Press on March 29. "This is too good; who ever heard of such a thing before but a tenderfoot of the tenderest kind."
15. Cow Boy, March 27, 1884.
16. That is, with color pictures.
17. Dickinson Press, March 22, 1884.



18. April 17.
19. April 19.
20. April 24.
21. April 26.
22. May 1.
23. May 10.
24. Cow Boy, May 29, 1884.
25. Cow Boy, May 8, 1884: "'Little Red Riding Hood,' the Allard correspondent of The Glendive Times, needs to brush up his (?) zoology a little. Three Mrs. Partingtons in one sentence is a little too bad. He (?) speaks of the 'inveterate' order and family insecta. Insecta are a class, not a family, and all insecta are articulates, not invertebrates as is doubtless meant by 'inveterate.' If L. R. R. H. means 'family insectivora' she—beg pardon—he is again wrong as all insectivora are mammals and hence vertebrates and not 'inveterates.' Future zoological lessons will be charged full rates."
26. Cow Boy, May 7, 1885: "The St Paul Globe, with its usual correctness, states that Theodore Roosevelt passed through St. Paul lately on his way to his ranch on the Elkhorn. For the benefit of the Globe's thick-witted stock editor we would state that the name Elkhorn applies to the brand on the cattle and not to any river, creek, coulie, ravine or butte in the Bad Lands."
27. Cow Boy, September 3, 1885.
28. Cow Boy, June 26, 1884.
29. Cow Boy, May 29, 1884.
30. Cow Boy, June 5, 1884.
31. Cow Boy, June 26, 1884.
32. Dickinson Press, July 5, 1884. "tf" was an abbreviation which meant till forbidden. It was sometimes used on small newspaper advertisements to indicate that the

advertisement was to run until cancelled by the advertiser. Evidently Scott was being ironic. (See p. 330 of Hand Composition, A Treatise on the Trade and Practice of the Compositor and Printer, by Hugo Jahn, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1931.)

33. Packard described his journey in a series of articles which ran in the Cow Boy from July 24 to August 21 under the head "Our Black Hills Trip."
34. Cow Boy, July 17, 1884.
35. Dickinson Press, July 12, 1884.
36. "Report of Brigadier-General Terry," Oct. 6, 1884, in Report of The Secretary of War, Being part of The Message and Documents Communicated to the Two Houses of Congress at the Beginning of the Second Session of the Forty-eighth Congress (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884), pp. 110-111.
37. Oscar Osburn Winther, The Transportation Frontier, Trans-Mississippi West, 1865-1890 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1964), p. 38.

## IV. Entrepreneur

Manager Packard started over the line on Monday on a tour of inspection, and reports from the first home station that everything is in good shape.

The Bad Lands Cow Boy<sup>1</sup>

At the intersection of two vague streets of dust, just across the street from the skating rink and right next to the Marquis' stable, stood the office of The Bad Lands Cow Boy. The building was about thirty feet long by twenty wide, with a chimney at the west end and a door at the east. Large white letters spelled BAD LANDS COW BOY across the slant of roof facing the train tracks, and this sign was the "subject of profound meditation and anxious inquiry on the part of emigrants passing through. One emigrant was heard to remark that it must be a pretty tough cow-boy that they put on exhibition in this country."<sup>2</sup>

The walls of the Cow Boy office were of twelve inch perpendicular board siding with two inch vertical laths

covering the cracks where the siding joined. Inside the walls were covered with building paper which in winter served as "a good wind-break if one kept a watchful eye on it for cracks and punctures." To keep his office warm on wintry publication days Packard filled a large cannon stove with lignite from his own Bad Lands coal mine, and kept the stove burning red hot for hours. Often his keg of ink froze solid on such days and he was forced to set it next to the stove till the ink thawed. He used the melted ink on the stove side while the ink on the other side remained "hard as the keg itself."<sup>3</sup>

In his office Packard had a Washington hand press, a job press, an assortment of body and job type. A low partition across one corner of the room marked off his 'boudoir,' which contained a bed, a washbasin, and the shaving mirror soon to be shattered by Bad Man Finnegan's bullet. The major enterprises which Packard managed from this office were, of course, his newspaper business and job printing business, but he also engaged in a number of other business activities in the Bad Lands. He sold town lots for the Marquis de Morès, sold Studebaker wagons to freighters and ranchers, sold fire insurance policies for the Springfield Fire and Marine Insurance Company of Massachusetts, sold subscriptions to "any paper or periodical in the

world," sold coal from the Bad Lands mine which he owned and worked in partnership with Pat O'Hara, and operated an experimental vegetable farm on top of one of the buttes because he thought it would be interesting "to find out what the summits of the buttes are good for."<sup>4</sup> In addition to all this, during much of 1884 he served as general manager of the Marquis de Morès' Medora and Black Hills Stage Line.

The Marquis had initially hired Bob Roberts to set his stage line in operation, but Roberts spent considerable money without producing many results. The Marquis eventually replaced him with Joseph Pennell. Pennell proved no more successful than Roberts—indications are that both Roberts and Pennell were mainly interested in milking de Morès of his cash.<sup>5</sup> So one day the Marquis came dashing into the office of The Bad Lands Cow Boy and said to Packard, "I want you to put on the stage line for me."

"But, Marquis," said Packard, "I never saw a stage or a stage-line. I don't know anything about it."

"It makes no difference," said de Morès. "You will not rob me."

Packard considered a while, and finally accepted: the prospect of running a stage line seemed too romantic and too lucrative for him to decline. The contract which he signed with the Marquis stipulated that Packard was to be sole owner

of the line as soon as it had paid for itself from its net earnings. Not only that, total receipts of lots sold in Medora and elsewhere were to be considered as part of those net earnings.<sup>6</sup> Though he would get no salary, Packard decided his income from the Cow Boy and the coal mine would carry him through until he could make the stage line profitable. So he hired a man to put out his paper for him and set about learning the stage coaching business, which turned out to be a very complicated and expensive business. Ahead of Packard lay the task of establishing stage stations every ten or fifteen miles along the road to Deadwood, periodically stocking these stations with hay and supplies, providing some of the stations with food and accommodation for passengers, hiring men to manage the stations, purchasing coaches, selecting and training horses, hiring skilled drivers. The venture was so expensive that Medora's chief rival, Dickinson, couldn't even attempt to compete by putting on a stage line of its own, could only hope that Packard and the Marquis would fail. If they succeeded, the Medora-Deadwood route would undoubtedly become the major route to the Hills.

Packard hit trouble from the start. Money was not forthcoming from the Marquis to make necessary purchases. The mail contract was not forthcoming either, and the mail

contract was almost essential if the stage line were to prove a paying proposition. The Marquis went to Washington to hurry matters. Still no contract. Delay followed delay. To make the impatient Packard even more disgusted, gold had been discovered at Coeur d'Alene, and Black Hills miners had begun swarming there by the thousands.<sup>7</sup> Had Packard's stages been running, these miners could have travelled by coach to Medora and there caught the Northern Pacific west to their destination. But the stages weren't running, and all this trade was missed.

Eventually Packard did get work on the line under way. Station locations were decided upon, marked on the prairie. Supplies and workmen were sent out to build the stations, and for a while there was "something doing on each mile of the 215 between Medora and Deadwood."<sup>8</sup> Thereafter work proceeded swiftly, and about October first Packard and some others took a stagecoach on a dress rehearsal run to Deadwood. It was an exciting ride. Half-wild horses had to be blindfolded at almost every station in order to get them in harness. At Spearfish, the last stop before Deadwood, the star team was hooked in. These were excellent horses, the lead team being "two of the best leaders that ever piloted a stage coach into Deadwood," the wheel team "the most perfectly trained pair of horses" that Packard had ever driven, and the

extremely strong swing team "a matched pair of roans, partially broken to harness but wild as hawks." The entrance of the coach into Deadwood "was spectacular and ended in an invitation ride with Mayor Bullock at the head of the city and county dignitaries in the coach . . . ." <sup>9</sup>

The stage line had become a reality. A month and a half after the inaugural run the Cow Boy joyously reported:

Again has the Medora stage smashed all records. The coach arrived here last Tuesday night just thirty-two hours and five minutes out of Deadwood. This is time never dreamed of, and beats the best time in or out of Deadwood by any stage over any line nearly four hours. <sup>10</sup>

Yet very soon Packard withdrew from major involvement in the business. He resigned as general manager and became secretary of the company. <sup>11</sup> The reason for his withdrawal was purely financial. The situation, as Packard explained it, was this: "No mail contract; hardly a month of earnings before winter, when there was no chance of paying operating expenses; responsible for the pay-roll but not on it; with a private pay-roll and expenses equal to or greater than my private income; with all my cash savings gone in the preliminary expenses of putting on the line and finally with no chance, under my contract, of getting a cent from the stage line before that nebulous time when it had paid for itself." Packard informed



the Marquis of his intentions, stayed on until another man could be hired, and then left his duties "with a grunt of relief."<sup>12</sup>

Stages continued running through the winter. More talk was heard of a mail contract soon to be won. But the mail contract never materialized. By May of 1885 the Medora and Black Hills Stage and Express Line had failed. On May 21 the Cow Boy was forced to report, "The entire stage outfit rolled in Tuesday evening, horses, coaches, station furniture and all."

In addition to all his other activities, Packard served as a museum curator, having announced in his first issue that "We intend starting a museum of Bad Lands curiosities, and our subscribers will greatly oblige us by bringing in anything they may find that is either curious or remarkable. Frank Moore has already given us a good start with one of the finest pieces of petrifications it has ever been our lot to see." Packard's enthusiasm for his Bad Lands museum did not stem purely from his own strong interest in natural history. He saw the museum as an opportunity to promote Medora and boom the Bad Lands. He intended to exhibit the museum's collection at the Chicago exposition, thinking this would be the "best possible advertisement of the Bad Lands."<sup>13</sup> Frequently he gave his readers progress reports

on the growing museum collection, which eventually included, among many other things, pieces of scoria containing perfect leaf impressions, petrified eels, crystallizations, the petrified knee joint of a mastodon, a horned toad in a cigar box, and what appeared to be the petrified coccyx of an Indian woman.<sup>14</sup>

Editorial domicile, place of many businesses, and Bad Lands museum, the office of the Cow Boy was also the congregating spot for those men of the community who liked to chat and "to smell printers' ink and feel civilized."<sup>15</sup> Perhaps what attracted them was the educated editor, perhaps the copies of current newspapers from all over the country. Or perhaps the newspaper office, by the very fact that it was a place where thought was composed and put to paper, somehow provided an atmosphere conducive to conversation. In any case, the Cow Boy office, as one of "only two public places in Medora which were not 'booze joints,'"<sup>16</sup> became something of a center for cultured confabulations, a place where men gathered to discuss the topics of the day without much fear of being interrupted by drunken hullabaloo, or by anyone slinging lead other than the variety found in the type case. Men dropped in sometimes in the evening, sometimes during the day when Packard was getting his paper out.

When Packard composed a newspaper, he never wrote copy.

He simply stood at his type case and set the words as they occurred to him.<sup>17</sup> Often he set up his stories well before publication day, and this habit sometimes resulted in a story appearing in fragmented form—the first part appearing high in a column, where Packard had set it early in the week, and the second part appearing lower down, where Packard had set the unexpected sequel to the original story several days later. Because rearranging the entire column would have entailed extra work, he simply let the two paragraphs stand in separate places, though they commented on a single news event.

As publication day approached, Packard went to the depot express office and picked up the ready-print sheets which he had ordered from the Northwestern Newspaper Union in St. Paul. Very likely he paid cash on delivery for his ready-prints,<sup>18</sup> which were standard sized newspaper sheets that had been printed on one side with news, informative articles, stories, patent medicine advertisements, and sundry other material. The reverse side of each of these sheets was blank. On the blank side Packard printed his own copy. Thus, a single pull on his Washington press made a complete newspaper. Once fully printed, the sheets were folded in half so that Packard's copy appeared on the outer two pages, ready-print copy on the inner two pages: page one by

Packard, pages two and three by the Northwestern Newspaper Union, page four by Packard. The Cow Boy's sheet size was 24 inches by 36 inches. Each page had seven columns of 13 picas, with 6-point column rule, and a total printed length of 131 picas.<sup>19</sup>

The Northwestern Newspaper Union supplied "patent insides" to a number of small country papers. The Dickinson Press was among them. Despite the considerable editorial differences between the Press and the Cow Boy, the two papers were identical on the inside. Only occasionally did certain news items on page two of the two papers differ, apparently as a result of the Cow Boy being published a few days before the Press, and thus getting a slightly different version of the Northwestern Newspaper Union's weekly edition.<sup>20</sup>

Printing hundreds of copies of the Cow Boy for a weekly edition meant a vigorous workout for the printer, even at just one pull per newspaper. The printing operation required a number of steps and there was a trick to operating the Washington press. As Packard explained it, "Just before the 'squeeze' which makes the impression there is a point where the leverage must come with a fast pull. The smooth plate forming the platen is forced straight down on the form by means of a toggle-joint actuated by a lever ending in a wooden handle like a base-ball bat. The form is run out from

under the platen, the frisket is raised, the printed paper removed, the type inked with a large two-handed roller, the unprinted sheet centered on the type form, the frisket lowered over the paper and the form run back under the platen. The wooden handle is grasped with the right hand, and then comes the trick: a quick, steady pull or jerk just as the toggle-joint forces the platen down to make the impression."<sup>21</sup>

Working the hand press was so fascinating an operation that few who saw it could resist wanting to try it themselves—and whenever anyone asked to work the press, Packard had a chance to play a joke. On one occasion Theodore Roosevelt was in the Cow Boy office and said he'd like to print a page. Packard accommodated him by bringing the lever down to the crucial point, then turning it over to him. "Roosevelt got both hands on the lever and braced a foot against the bed of the press, but couldn't overcome the heavy impression to which I had adjusted the press. He gave it up temporarily with the remark that Samson might have done it when in training to pull down the pillars of the temple, but not after Delilah had finished with him. Then he watched me and caught the trick."<sup>22</sup>

On printing days Packard often "roped in the first available man" to run the big two-handed roller that inked

the type.<sup>23</sup> Sometimes he engaged the services of one of the many tramp printers who drifted through the west, to help him get out his paper. But sometimes he put out the entire week's edition by himself:

We feel rather proud of this issue of the COW BOY as every stroke of work, both literary and mechanical was done by "ye editor" since Monday morning. During the three days we have also turned out over \$25 worth of job work. We are thinking of running a supplement next issue, just for recreation.<sup>24</sup>

Packard sold his papers to regular subscribers for two dollars a year. Evidently he'd had previous experience with deadbeats, for in his first issue, under the heading "A WORD TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS," he sternly pointed out the necessity of a newspaper being run on business principles, and the necessity of subscribers paying before the end of three months. "Every subscription that is not paid up within that time will positively be taken from our list and what will be the subscriber's loss will be our everlasting gain," he wrote, adding that "all will understand that the editor is not out here for his health, as it is remarkably fine in any locality." He said he was willing, "if a subscriber should happen to be out of cash," to take furs of all kinds at the highest market price, instead of money. But despite

Packard's warnings, and his willingness to take furs instead of cash, after two and a half months some subscribers still had not paid, and he was forced to pronounce that "On general principles a subscriber who will not pay before the end of the first quarter does not mean to pay at all and the sooner we get rid of him the better. . . no business can be run without money and printing is no exception to the rule. If anyone wants THE COW BOY they want it badly enough to pay two dollars a year."<sup>25</sup> Eventually Packard quit giving credit. His motto became "Cash or no COW BOY,"<sup>26</sup> and he demanded cash in advance.

Over the years Packard tried a number of ploys to increase circulation. In his first issue he urged present subscribers to seek new subscribers on his behalf, and he was still using this simple tactic a year later:

As we enter upon the second volume of the COW BOY, we hope that all our subscribers, especially our local ones, will make an effort toward extending our circulation. There is not a solitary one of our subscribers that cannot induce one or more other persons to subscribe. It is well worth the trial, and our friends will be surprised at the good they can accomplish by a little effort. Try it and see.<sup>27</sup>

On one occasion a front page ad in the Cow Boy offered a joint eight-month subscription to the Cow Boy and the Weekly Pioneer Press of St. Paul for just two dollars, and ended

with the observation that it was confidently expected that nearly every man in the country would "avail himself of this opportunity to secure their home paper and a first-class metropolitan paper."<sup>28</sup> Evidently this ad was initiated and written in St. Paul, for The Dickinson Press ran the same one, worded precisely the same way, offering The Dickinson Press and Weekly Pioneer Press for just two dollars for eight months. On another occasion Packard offered reduced rates to subscribers and a \$10 prize to the person bringing him the most new subscribers.<sup>29</sup> In January of 1886 he offered a year's subscription to the Cow Boy, plus Huffman's roundup views—"thirty-six handsomely finished photographs of the most prominent round-up scenes"—for just six dollars, a saving of one dollar over the combined regular prices.<sup>30</sup>

Packard expected a circulation of 300 (and 250 subscribers) by the end of the first year, but the Cow Boy had a circulation of over 400 before it was four months old,<sup>31</sup> and by six months had "a bona fide circulation of five hundred and twenty copies and not a solitary deadhead on our list."<sup>32</sup> In view of the fact that the population of Medora and Little Missouri was only 251, and the total population of Billings county only about 350, this was pretty good circulation.<sup>33</sup> The paper was popular with train passengers, and in addition to his subscribed circulation Packard sold seven or



eight hundred copies<sup>34</sup> at the depot each week. His most successful salesman was Johnny O'Hara. Johnny fortuitously turned up one day and became printer's devil in the Cow Boy office, and from that day on it was usually Johnny who boarded passenger trains with his arms full of Cow Boys and returned with money to pay current expenses.<sup>35</sup> Packard could not speak too highly of the indomitable Johnny:

Again we weep. Our proud position as fighting editor will be occupied by us no more forever. Our heavy-weight assistant who at train time makes the air musical and the pilgrims' eyes bug out by his blood-curdling way of shouting: "B-a-d L-a-n-d-s C-o-w B-o-y" has usurped our prerogative, so to speak. A callow news-boy who objected to the afore-said heavy-weight assistant's presence on the train is now mourning his rash objection. So, we might add, are his eyes. The above should be a warning both now and forever to all news-boys not to interfere with our b-a-d man.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to disposing of papers to subscribers and train passengers, Packard each week sent a number of papers to "exchanges"—that is, to newspapers with which he had an agreement to exchange weekly issues. This exchange agreement offered the editors involved three large advantages. First, it gave them an opportunity to borrow articles from each other, which not only made their individual editorial tasks easier, but very likely improved the quality and scope of

information their readers received. Second, it provided easy opportunities for journalistic battles to take place, such as the one between the Cow Boy and The Dickinson Press—battles which generated relatively effortless copy and gave frontier readers a brand of pleasure doubtless similar to that which they experienced while watching barroom brawls. Third, the exchange agreement provided a sense of community among the brotherhood of professional journalists, and by making each editor aware that all the others were watching his performance each week, possibly improved both the printing quality and journalistic quality of the newspapers involved.

The exchange system was useful in other ways. From his exchanges Packard obtained lists of the names of the most important men in western towns and he sent a copy of the Cow Boy to each of these individuals in order to spread abroad the names of his paper and his town. On one occasion he used the exchange system to try to mete out justice to a villain named Bill Lundy. Lundy, of the 13 outfit, had "for some time been worming himself into the confidence of other boys in the outfit and borrowing what he could of them. He also drew his pay in advance from the 13 company." Lundy soon "landed in Medora and with a plausible tale, induced T. W. Gordon to trust him for a suit of clothes. He then

boarded the cars and the last heard of him was at Miles City." Packard printed these facts in an article which he concluded by noting that the

boys of the 13 outfit are especially angered over the actions of this dead beat and want him shown up in all the cow papers of the west. It is just this kind of a rascal that hurts the reputation of cowboys as a class and each should feel it his duty to bring him to justice. Range papers will confer a favor by copying the above.<sup>37</sup>

Although editors using the exchange system were expected to borrow from each other, they were also expected to give proper recognition to any paper from which they reprinted material. Some didn't, and complaints about stolen articles were not rare. On one occasion the Yellowstone Journal complained that it was "getting tired of furnishing brains for a number of territorial papers, and if the practice is continued those papers which transgress will be dropped from our exchange list." Packard reprinted the Journal's sad objection, then commented upon it as follows:

The above is the undiluted essence of an unspeakable gall. All the time The Journal is wishing and wanting, has it ever entered the mind of the editor that perhaps other papers want credit for their articles. Coming, as the above extract does, from a paper that stole bodily a half-column article from THE COW BOY and only changed two words, to make it apply to Miles City

instead of the Bad Lands, and added a few lines at the end so that the readers of The Journal might recognize the editor's bungling work—in the face of all this we certainly desire to know if the editor wants the earth fried on both sides and served with cream gravy, or will he just take it raw if a part of the solar system is thrown in?<sup>38</sup>

The relationship between editors of exchanges was a curious one. They were in competition with each other, each touting his own town or area. They competed also in the quality of their work, and were quick to criticize both the writing and printing quality to be found in other "sheets." And they competed in argumentation, so much so that they often seemed to be slinging mud at each other. But hyperbole was the style of the frontier and it is unlikely that feelings, as a general rule, ran quite so high as language. To some extent the rivalry between papers was a game played only on publication days. After the game editors were quite able to fraternize. They were brothers in the same trade, depended upon each other to pass news around, made each other welcome as visitors in one another's towns, frequently supported each other's causes. Even in the midst of the feud between the Cow Boy and The Dickinson Press over the freight route question, the Press noted in its columns that Packard had been named county commissioner, and congratulated "Bro. Packard on this mark of appreciation of

his ability, and of his services in getting the county organized."<sup>39</sup> Packard, likewise, praised the Glendive Times for the "determined fight" it was waging with "the corrupt Custer county ring,"<sup>40</sup> though a month earlier he had mocked it for its ignorance of zoology and a year later would call its editor a liar.

To the casual glance The Bad Lands Cow Boy seems the quintessence of independent and untrammelled journalism—the work of a single editor who rode his own way after the truth, tracking down stories and printing them to suit himself. "Every printed word bore my brand," said Packard in later years. "There were no mavericks in Bad Lands Cow Boy articles."<sup>41</sup> The statement fits very well with the myth of the old west as a place where every man was utterly independent, and no doubt Packard was pretty independent by most standards. But it is equally true that in getting his paper out he relied on a large number of people. At least half of the words that appeared in Packard's paper were assembled in St. Paul by the staff of the Northwestern Newspaper Union, and roughly half of the paper's remaining words appeared in articles reprinted from exchanges. Thus, only about a quarter of the editorial content in each issue was actually written by Packard. In a number of issues absolutely nothing was written by him, for he often left his paper in the hands

of temporary editors while he was away on business or to attend political conventions. In the late summer and fall of 1884, for instance, he entrusted the Cow Boy to other hands for nine weeks out of twelve while he travelled to Duluth, Pierre, and Deadwood in connection with his duties as manager of the stage line and as a delegate to the Republican territorial convention. And in 1885 he abandoned the Cow Boy to the editorial talents of J. C. Fisher and Levi Deffebach while he returned to Ohio for four weeks to be married to Miss Janie Fitch Hayford of Oberlin.

Packard was very careful about what he printed, and refused to print any story of which he didn't know the source:

. . . the fact that no name was signed to the article consigned it to the waste-basket; the common fate of all anonymous communications. We hold ourselves personally responsible for every article that appears in the COW BOY and never, under any circumstances, divulge the name of a correspondent, but the rule is equally as strict on all papers, to never publish an article, the source of which is unknown.<sup>42</sup>

Despite such caution, however, he could not prevent mavericks of the worst kind from occasionally getting into the Cow Boy corral:

Relying on an authority we supposed to be good, the COW BOY of two weeks ago contained a statement to the effect that W. H. Merrifield had taken unto himself a wife on his eastern trip. On his return, we found that our informant, laboring under the delusion that it was funny, had made up the story out of whole cloth. This is as far from our idea of fun as black is from white and we cannot appreciate the sentiments of anyone who can even see a funny side to it.<sup>43</sup>

The player of the hoax was none other than J. C. Fisher, who owned the skating rink across the street from the Cow Boy office, and who had earlier done Packard the favor of serving as his stand-in editor. In strictest confidence Fisher had given Packard's reporter<sup>44</sup> the false information regarding Merrifield's marriage, warning the reporter not to print it. This assured that it was printed. Then, when Merrifield returned from his eastern trip, Fisher sent someone to meet him at the train and to ask him to play along with the hoax by going to Packard and pretending anger over the false article. Merrifield did so. The result was that soon Packard came "boiling out to the barn" where Fisher was feeding his horse, and called him outside. Fisher came out, bringing his pitchfork with him.

"Drop that fork," said Packard. "I am going to give you one of the best licking you ever had."

Fisher, aware that Packard could whip him, refused to drop the fork and so escaped a thrashing. But from that day

forward Packard never spoke to Fisher. Ordinarily Packard made every effort to stay on good terms with the town's businessmen, but evidently he regarded tampering with his paper's veracity as a very serious matter.



NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1. Cow Boy, October 23, 1884.
2. Cow Boy, May 15, 1884.
3. This and the preceding description of the Cow Boy office is from Hagedorn, BLN, pp. 861 and 1098 (hand drawn map of Medora), and from the picture facing p. 130 in Hagedorn, Roosevelt.
4. Cow Boy, March 20, 1884.
5. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, pp. 122-123.
6. Conversation and contract details from Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 123.
7. Hagedorn, BLN, pp. 902a-903.
8. Hagedorn, BLN, p. 904.
9. Hagedorn, BLN, pp. 905e-905f.
10. Cow Boy, November 27, 1884.
11. Cow Boy, December 4, 1884.
12. Hagedorn, BLN, p. 930.
13. Cow Boy, March 6, 1884.
14. Cow Boy, February 28, April 10, August 28, and September 25, 1884.
15. Hagedorn, BLN, p. 43.
16. Hagedorn, BLN, p. 43.
17. Hagedorn, BLN, p. 863 and Roosevelt, p. 132.

18. Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism (New York: Macmillan Co., 1950), p. 478.
19. Measurements were communicated to me in a letter from the State Historical Society of North Dakota.
20. In January of 1886 The Dickinson Press switched to a new format and began using "patent outsides" instead of "patent insides."
21. Hagedorn, BLN, pp. 861-862.
22. Hagedorn, BLN, p. 862.
23. Hagedorn, BLN, p. 863.
24. Cow Boy, May 15, 1884.
25. Cow Boy, April 24, 1884.
26. Cow Boy, March 26, 1885.
27. Cow Boy, February 5, 1885.
28. Cow Boy, July 24, 1884.
29. Cow Boy, December 24, 1885.
30. Cow Boy, January 28, 1886.
31. Cow Boy, May 22, 1884.
32. Cow Boy, August 7, 1884.
33. These estimates were published in the Cow Boy on December 18, 1884. But many years later Packard told Hagedorn that the population of the county in about June of 1884 was 122 males and 27 females. See Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 136.
34. This is the figure Hagedorn gives on p. 194 of Roosevelt.
35. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 329.
36. Cow Boy, July 2, 1885.

37. Cow Boy, July 15, 1886.
38. Cow Boy, March 27, 1884.
39. Dickinson Press, May 24, 1884.
40. Cow Boy, June 5, 1884.
41. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 132.
42. Cow Boy, October 7, 1886.
43. Cow Boy, February 18, 1886.
44. Other than in Fisher's letter on p. 951 of Hagedorn's BLN—the source of this story—I have seen no allusion to Packard having had a "reporter."

## V. Reformer

Almost invariably a number of bumming place seekers and political shysters get hold of the county reins at first. Billings county is to be an exception or there will be music in the air.

The Bad Lands Cow Boy<sup>1</sup>

In the small community on the banks of the Little Missouri were very few energetic, "rustling," "wide-awake," businessmen to keep the business life of the Bad Lands moving forward at a cracking pace. One such man, however, was Bob Roberts, partner in the Pennell and Roberts freight company and owner of The Senate saloon. The Cow Boy favored business, and Roberts darts in and out of the pages of the Cow Boy with almost frenetic energy as he heads now to Deadwood to negotiate contracts with merchants, now to Bismarck on business, now to St. Paul to be appointed U. S. Commissioner for the Bad Lands at the World's Fair in New Orleans, now to the depot to turn his pet bears loose for entertainment of the train passengers. And in the Cow Boy we see Roberts depart-

ing with gangs of men to improve the freight route to Deadwood, proposing to improve the streets of Medora at his own expense, taking potshots (good-natured ones) at a tramp. These glimpses of Roberts in the Cow Boy, however, tend always to reveal him from his most flattering angle. There was another side to the man, less pleasant and never reported.

Roberts was short, bull-necked, bulbous-nosed, narrow-eyed. His abnormally long mouth occasionally showed teeth like fangs when he smiled, which undoubtedly had something to do with his saloon being known as "Big-mouthed Bob's." The red of Bob's complexion and the red of his thick moustache matched the fire of his temper and the fire of his notorious "Forty Mile Red Eye" whisky concoction. The whisky had made him a man of influence in Little Missouri and Medora, and Roberts was frequently under his own influence, raging drunk.<sup>2</sup> And when drunk he could be dangerous. Packard learned this firsthand when called upon one day to prevent Roberts from doing fatal work with his six revolvers. Bob was threatening a man in The Senate saloon, holding a revolver in either hand. Packard entered the saloon to keep the peace, took the two revolvers from Roberts, and locked them in a safe. He returned to find Roberts holding two more six-shooters. Packard took these

side-irons also, yet scarcely had he done so when another pair of six-shooters appeared in Roberts' hands—"the man seemed to leak six-shooters at every pore." It was an exciting incident, involving Roberts, his bartender Jim Hannigan, and another man whom Hannigan came within one empty revolver chamber of killing.<sup>3</sup> The row was never reported in the Cow Boy:

THE SENATE  
 Roberts & Co.,  
 BILLIARD AND  
 POOL HALL.

—  
 FINEST BAR IN LITTLE MISSOURI

—  
 Wines, Liquors and Cigars  
 Strictly First-Class.

—  
 THE GENIAL JIM  
 is in constant attendance. <sup>4</sup>

Viewed from a certain careful angle, Bob Roberts was energetic, public-spirited, and hopeful. Viewed from another, he was loutish, brutal, and dangerous. He donated the hall above his saloon for community meetings of all sorts, and downstairs he pulled revolvers on his guests from time to time. Early in 1884, not long after Packard began

publishing, a curious incident took place which sheds some light on the way Packard handled news not only of Roberts, but of another dubious, but useful, businessman, Gerry Paddock. One day Johnny Nelson, the innocent young Swede who ran the general store in Little Missouri, entered Bob's saloon and blurted out that he was in trouble with his creditors in St. Paul. Among those present was Gerry Paddock, the man who had started the town's cemetery by shooting Livingston from ambush. Paddock said to Johnny, "You give me the keys and I'll see that the sheriff don't get your stuff." So Johnny gave Paddock the keys to his store. And Paddock was as true as his word. That night he and some accomplices cleaned out Johnny's store, leaving not so much as a shoestring for either the sheriff or Johnny Nelson. The exact part Bob Roberts played in this swindle is unclear, but what is certain is that afterwards his two tame bears wore ready-made coats from St. Paul.<sup>5</sup> Here is how the incident was reported in the Cow Boy:

It is not yet decided whether John Nelson has failed or not. Certain it is that his goods have disappeared. The affair is at present involved in mystery. It seems that the cause of the whole business was that Nelson was led to believe that his creditors were about to close in on him. As a matter of fact this was entirely untrue. One of his heaviest creditors has since said that he would even have trusted him for a larger amount. At any rate, John

for some reason believed that he was to be closed out and the goods were secreted somewhere. Nelson has heretofore borne a good reputation in town. He has been thoroughly honest in all his transactions and has the good will of every one. In this instance, however, he allowed his fears to get the better of his judgment. It is to be hoped that the matter will be straightened out satisfactorily.<sup>6</sup>

Thus are the intricate convolutions of the world ever flattened in newsprint. Perhaps Packard knew as a certainty no more than what he printed, and was rightly unwilling to venture into rumors and gossip. Yet the feeling persists, in issue after issue, that Packard treated certain prominent citizens far more companionably in his pages than perhaps they deserved. Evidently he was unwilling to alienate men such as Roberts and Paddock who, although they were far from model citizens, nonetheless did the town a good deal of useful service.<sup>7</sup> Discretion proved important even for the wild and woolly editor of the Cow Boy, who, according to a contemporary sketch in a Minneapolis newspaper, "goes out and kills a bear every morning before he attacks his raw steak."<sup>8</sup>

Packard also exercised considerable 'discretion' in reporting (or not reporting) a shooting incident involving Roberts which was surely one of the most bizarre that ever took place in Dakota. It happened on a Thursday evening



in 1884. George Heywood was drunk and Bob Roberts was drunk and since the two men had been feuding for weeks they took this drunken opportunity to renew their bickering. Eventually they ended up in Bob Roberts' saloon, where angry words were exchanged. Roberts became agitated, drew his pistol, blazed away at Heywood. Heywood staggered slightly as a bullet hit him in the left breast. The bullet entered his body, glanced off his collar bone, emerged from his shoulder, and dropped down his sleeve into his hand. Heywood was stunned by drink, stunned by the force of the bullet. He shook himself, stretched out his hand, and handed the ball back to Roberts, saying, "Here's your bullet, I don't want it."

Hilarity exploded in The Senate saloon at this remark. The joke was on Roberts and, according to Bad Lands tradition, he had to buy a round of drinks for everyone in the house.<sup>9</sup> The roistering and celebrating continued until the bartender, Jim Hannigan, objected to George Heywood dripping blood on the bar.

The shooting took place on a Thursday evening. The following Monday Packard and Roberts left for Bismarck. Whether they travelled together is not known. Packard was on his way to attend Governor Pierce's reception and ball, and because he would be gone a week he left his paper "to

the tender mercies of a tramp printer."<sup>10</sup> But between Thursday when the shooting occurred and Monday when he left town it seems clear that Packard had plenty of time to set in type the remarkable story of the shooting of George Heywood, had he chosen to do so. Apparently he chose not to. For when the story appeared the following Thursday it was not at the top of the local column, where one might expect it to have been if Packard had set it, but jammed in at the very bottom, almost as an afterthought. It seems probable—as Packard himself later claimed in an unconvincing attempt to absolve himself of responsibility for the whole affair—that the story was set by the tramp printer. The story in the Cow Boy gave details of the shooting, noted that both Roberts and Heywood "had been drinking a little," stated that "so far as the shooting is concerned, it is hard to say exactly how it happened," and concluded:

Eye-witnesses think the shooting of Heywood was accidental, as Mr. Roberts is an excellent shot and could have killed Heywood had he any intention of doing so. He sent two balls through the ceiling, and it is thought the third was intended to be high, but the revolver went off half-cocked, the ball striking Heywood in the left breast, tearing the flesh and passing through his left arm. Roberts and Heywood are good citizens, and it is to be hoped that nothing serious will be the result of this little misunderstanding.<sup>11</sup>

Theodore Roosevelt happened to be swimming his horse across the river when the shooting occurred. He heard the shots coming from the direction of Roberts' saloon, and he saw both Roberts and Heywood immediately after the incident. He was so struck by the incident, and also by how it was reported in the Cow Boy,<sup>12</sup> that he subsequently wrote it up in one of his sketches of frontier life, concluding his account by observing that "the local paper, which rejoiced in the title of 'The Bad Lands Cowboy,' chronicled the event in the usual vague way as an 'unfortunate occurrence' between 'two of our most esteemed fellow-citizens.' The editor was a good fellow, a college graduate, and a first-class base-ball player, who always stood stoutly up against any corrupt dealing; but, like all other editors in small Western towns, he was intimate with both combatants in almost every fight."<sup>13</sup>

Generally Packard did stand up stoutly against corrupt dealing, and generally he was outspoken against any practice of which he disapproved, regardless of public opinion. For instance, believing drunkenness was no excuse for criminal behavior, he frequently said so in his columns. And believing that the carrying of sidearms should be outlawed in town and even on roundups he often and vigorously editorialized on this theme.<sup>14</sup> His revolutionary views on these two subjects

were very unpopular in Medora, and from time to time cowboys took exception to them by giving the Cow Boy office a "touching up" with gunfire. And sometimes the boys took exception in other ways. One day George Heywood got drunk and decided to object to the Cow Boy's editorial policy by going after the editor with his fists. This proved bad judgment on Heywood's part. Packard fetched Heywood a blow that knocked him into a corner, where he fell on his arm and broke it. Some time later Heywood challenged Packard to an afternoon rematch. An eager crowd gathered at the appointed place to witness the fray. Packard appeared but Heywood didn't. The crowd was very disappointed.<sup>15</sup>

Packard was one of the few men in the Bad Lands who never carried sidearms. He didn't, he said, because he "refused to bet on another man's game." He knew he "was not and never could expect to be a real expert in handling a revolver,"<sup>16</sup> and he explained his position to Theodore Roosevelt one day, using a certain William Roberts to demonstrate his point:

William was a two-gun man of the type that considered a trigger a useless incumbrance on a revolver. He could jerk a revolver from a holster with his forefinger, twirl it half over, engage the hammer with his thumb and let it fall on the cartridge so quickly that it was impossible to see all the movements. In a fraction of a second the bullet was on its way. . . .

I called to William and asked him if he could hit two tomato cans, one with each gun, while the cans were in the air. William said he could and Roosevelt and I rustled up a can each for the trial. Standing in line with William and about ten feet on each side, Roosevelt and I tossed the cans in the air. William had been standing with his hands at his sides but the first two shots came while the cans were on the way up. Then came two more as the cans started to come down and then a fusillade that sent the cans rolling after they had struck the ground. Probably not five seconds passed before ten shots were fired and the cans showed that five bullets had passed through each. It was a wonderful exhibition but I had seen William do it before and it was the deciding reason why I never carried a gun in the Bad Lands.<sup>17</sup>

For self-defense Packard relied upon his iron side-stick, a wedge-shaped stick of iron used to lock up type forms in the days before Hempel quoins came into general use. At close range it was an effective weapon. On one occasion a Medora butcher abused a couple of Chinamen and then, brandishing a long knife, hurried to the Cow Boy office with the intention of preventing adverse editorial comment on his deed in the next issue. The butcher's judgment of the Cow Boy editor, however, proved as faulty as George Heywood's had been. His knife was no match for the iron side-stick.<sup>18</sup>

Packard later speculated that it may have been incidents like these which led to his being elected, at a citizens' meeting, as one of two men in charge of law and order on the

eastern side of the river.<sup>19</sup> The other official elected to preserve order was Bob Roberts.<sup>20</sup> What Roberts did to fulfill his duties is not clear, but Packard did a number of things. He became, in effect, Medora's first law officer, although his position was anomalous:

I suppose there never was a bigger bluff in the range country than the authority this election seemed to give me. There was no organization, no executive committee and no instructions of any kind. Apparently I was to outline my own duties and execute them as I saw fit. Perhaps this was in deference to the fact that my office was purely honorary, so far as a salary was concerned. My first decision was to work entirely on the transients and to make it appear that I was backed by a good organization. I made it a point not to mix openly in any row where I could avoid it. This was the easier way as the fifty or more permanent residents were generally law-abiding; the bad men usually monopolizing the fighting. There was no one to shed a tear if one or both the fighters should become candidates for Graveyard Butte.

When one of the transients had made himself sufficiently obnoxious, I took occasion to see him alone. Without any preamble, I told him we had decided he should leave town at once and never again appear in the Bad Lands round-up district. In no case were these instructions disobeyed. On the few occasions when it was necessary to interfere publicly, one or both the men were sealed in box cars and sent out on the first freight train. And they didn't come back. This process was varied one night when a few hilarious cowboys broke open a car, took out the prisoner and bound him to the cow-catcher of a train which had just arrived. Word came back from Glendive that he had arrived safely, though somewhat discommoded by a Texas steer which had been picked up en route by the cow-catcher.<sup>21</sup>

There were no bad men of great repute in the Bad Lands, no Jesse Jameses, Black Barts, or John Wesley Hardins. The criminal element seemed to be of three types. First, there were the ordinarily honest cowboys who occasionally got into trouble when drunk. Second, there were men like Bob Roberts and Gerry Paddock who occasionally shot people and were not averse to turning a discreet dishonest dollar whenever they could, but who managed to stay mainly within the ranks of the "respectable" citizenry. Third, there were the ruffians, layabouts, and n'er-do-wells who from time to time turned up in town with wads of money in their hands and, when the money was spent, drifted out of town to get more cash the easy way by stealing a horse or a steer, or by engaging in some other piece of outlawry. Michael "Redhead" Finnegan, a young man of surly disposition and unkempt appearance, was of the third type. He walked with a shambling gait, generally carried a long rifle, and wore a fringed buckskin suit. Finnegan was a common lout, always anxious to pick a quarrel, fond of stepping into a bar and crying, "I'm from Bitter Creek where the farther up you go the worse folks get, and I live at the fountainhead!" Like many rough characters of this sort, he was utterly unoriginal. The Bitter Creek line was one heard all over the west. One day Johnny Goodall, the Marquis' ranch foreman, found Finnegan lying dead drunk

on the floor of Bob Roberts' saloon. The sight of Finnegan in collapse inspired Goodall to a practical joke. He moved Finnegan to the top of a billiard table and sent to the barber shop for a clipper, then proceeded to cut off the curly red locks on one side of Finnegan's head, the beard on one side of his face, and the fringes on one side of his buckskin suit. The following morning when Finnegan recovered from his drunk and realized what had happened, he went berserk. He threatened vengeance on the town, and eventually he took it. One day not long afterward he hid himself in a bush and with his long rifle began to blaze away at everything in sight. His first shot went through the window of the Cow Boy office and smashed the mirror in front of J. C. Fisher, who was shaving in Packard's boudoir. Packard, meanwhile, was on his horse on a bluff behind the town. He saw what was happening and galloped to the scene. And before Finnegan knew it, Packard's horse had knocked him unconscious. Finnegan awoke in a locked boxcar, awaiting transportation out of the country. Then a friend of Finnegan released him, and Finnegan retreated to his cabin down the river for the time being.<sup>22</sup> But before long he'd be back, making page four of the Cow Boy:

Mr. Ba-a-d Man Finnegan again put himself on exhibition last Sunday. After filling up with



"valley-tan" he tried some of his "Bad man from Bitter creek" idiocy and came near doing some fatal work with his rifle, before Fred Willard relieved him of it. He was taken to Dickinson Monday morning by Sheriff Sebastian and pleading guilty to the charge of discharging fire-arms in a public place, was given a Christmas present of \$5 and costs by Justice Starr, which will net him about twenty days in jail. We have heard several apologists for Finnegan say that he would not have done as he did if he had been sober. This is no argument, either in law or the commonest of common sense. He has repeatedly done the same thing previously and it is high time that he was made to feel that there can be some control over him. Mr. Willard did his duty both as a citizen and an officer in putting a quietus on Mr. B. M. Finnegan.<sup>23</sup>

Packard not only fought with body, wits, and newsprint for law and order in the streets of Medora, but also acted to secure law and order in the largest sense: he pushed for organization of the cattlemen and for political organization of the county. In the early days when many ranchers weren't in the least interested in organizing themselves, it was Packard who called for stock meetings, enumerated the values of a stockmen's organization in his columns, and put forward lists of urgent items that should be considered on the agenda of stockmen's meetings. From the outset he was also involved with territorial politics. He urged that meetings be held to elect both Democrat and Republican representatives from Billings county to territorial party conventions. He served in 1885 as the Republican

representative to the Pierre convention. He complained in his columns of Dickinson and Bismarck justice, and pointed out to his readers that if Billings county were organized its citizens needn't suffer such indignity. He urged saloon keepers to refuse to pay tax to Stark county (Dickinson was the county seat) until courts made clear whether Stark county really had a right to the money just because it was the nearest organized county. He published figures which showed that if Billings county were organized and paid taxes to itself instead of to Stark county, the services available to its citizens would not only be better, but cheaper. He held petitions available in the Cow Boy office to be signed by those favoring organization of the county.

The cattlemen did organize. And on February 4, 1886—largely as a result of his own efforts during the previous two years—Packard could predict that "In spite of politics, shyster lawyers, wind or weather, Billings county will be organized on the second Monday in April."

His prediction was correct.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1. Cow Boy, June 5, 1884.
2. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, pp. 50-51. Lang, pp. 48, 55-56.
3. Hagedorn, BLN, pp. 867-867a.
4. Recurring advertisement in the Cow Boy.
5. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, pp. 80-81.
6. Cow Boy, February 21, 1884.
7. Paddock also worked for the Marquis. How he had wormed his way into this position was a matter of wonder to some people.
8. Cow Boy, May 1, 1884.
9. This tradition is mentioned by Lang, pp. 58-59, in another connection: "When the joke was on anybody, Bad Lands etiquette demanded that he treat the crowd—wherein, perhaps, lay one reason why somebody was always in the attempt to put something over—"
10. Hagedorn, BLN, p. 888.
11. Cow Boy, November 20, 1884.
12. Roosevelt did not remember the precise wording in the Cow Boy, but certainly correctly characterized the tenor of the Cow Boy's remarks.
13. The story of the Roberts-Heywood shoot-out as I have given it is a composite of details given in the Cow Boy of November 20, 1884; Theodore Roosevelt's Ranch Life and the Hunting-Trail (New York: The Century Co., 1899), pp. 95-96; and Hagedorn's BLN, pp. 888-889. In Hagedorn's BLN interview with Packard, Packard goes on to say: "Roosevelt never tired of the 'unfortunate

altercation' and 'prominent citizens' part of that heading and saddled it on me in his magazine story. I was in Chicago when the story was printed. A few days afterward Roosevelt registered at the old Richelieu and I went after him with blood in my eye. I was directed to his room but met him at the elevator door. Instantly his hands went into the air and he exclaimed: 'Don't shoot.' This pantomime was accompanied by a thirty-two reel dental display and he added: 'But wasn't it a bully story.' Well, anyway, I was ahead a day's work of the tramp printer. He had been tied to the bracing rods on the cow catcher of a way freight the evening of publication day and he didn't come back for his day's pay. When they undid him at Belfield he objected strenuously until offered a seat in the caboose. His immediate wish was to get away from the Bad Lands as far and as soon as possible. I do not know the reason for his free transportation. It may have been that Bob Roberts objected to being called a prominent citizen."

14. Packard often cited examples of roundups as far away as Texas and New Mexico in which the carrying of six-guns had been outlawed, and praised towns, such as Deadwood, where neither the carrying of six-guns nor such nonsense as "painting the town" were allowed.
15. Hagedorn, BLN, pp. 864-865; Roosevelt, pp. 132-133, 391.
16. Hagedorn, BLN, p. 936.
17. Hagedorn, BLN, pp. 936a-936b.
18. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 133.
19. Hagedorn, BLN, p. 865.
20. Cow Boy, May 14, 1885.
21. Hagedorn, BLN, pp. 866-866a.
22. These episodes concerning Finnegan are drawn from Hagedorn, BLN, pp. 234 and 492; and Roosevelt, pp. 368-370.
23. Cow Boy, December 24, 1885.

## VI. Editor

There is nothing that will destroy a person's faith in mankind quicker than to become an editor.

The Bad Lands Cow Boy<sup>1</sup>

Political stories, poems, humor pieces, opinion pieces, letters, sporting items, advertisements, correspondents' reports from outlying towns—all of these appeared on page one of the Cow Boy. Most important of all, the front page contained numerous livestock items. Other departments changed or vanished, but for the entire three years of the Cow Boy's existence the "Stock Notes" columns dominated page one. This was to be expected. Medora depended, above all else, on the success of the cattle business, and the Cow Boy had set out to be the best livestock paper in the northwest.

Because Packard was not an expert on cattle raising, most of his stories on the technical aspects of ranching were reprinted from other publications such as the Colorado Livestock Journal, Northwest Livestock Journal, Breeders

Gazette, National Livestock Journal, and New Mexico Stock Grower. His major personal contribution to the Billings county stockmen was his political support and advice: he urged organization of the stockmen, editorialized against the herd law, travelled to Bismarck to present to the legislature the views of the Bad Lands cattlemen regarding the herd law,<sup>2</sup> urged strict enforcement of a bull law,<sup>3</sup> suggested that a glue factory and tannery be built in town to make the slaughterhouse operation more economical,<sup>4</sup> and so forth. And Packard's livestock concerns extended to problems beyond the Bad Lands. He argued, for instance, in favor of governmental veterinary surgeons, on the English and German models, who would have authority and responsibility for containing and controlling foot and mouth disease and other contagious animal diseases.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to technical and political articles relating to the livestock business, Packard's livestock columns contained notices of animals strayed or stolen, notices of rewards for animals strayed or stolen, notices of rewards for information leading to the arrest of anyone setting fire to the prairie. They also frequently contained reprinted articles in praise of the honest and hardworking but much maligned cowboy. Sometimes Packard printed poems in his livestock columns, and these usually contradicted the picture

of the law-abiding cowboy which he attempted to convey in the rest of his paper:

A Racker from the Rockies

I'm a Buzzard from the Brazos, on a tear;  
     Hear me toot!  
 I'm a lifter of the flowing locks of hair;  
     Hear me hoot!  
 I'm a Racker from the Rockies,  
 And of all the town the talk in,  
 "He's a Pirate of the Pampas,"  
     On the shoot.

Those who love me call me "Little Dynamite,"  
     I'm a pet.  
 I'm a walking, stalking Terror of the Night  
     You can bet.  
 By my nickle-plated treasure,  
 Many a rusty-featured Greaser's  
     Sun has set.

Sometimes I strike an unprotected town,  
     Paint it red,  
 Choke the Sheriff, turn the Marshal upside down  
     On his head,  
 Call for drinks for all the party,  
 And if chinned by any smarty,  
     Pay him lead.

I'm a coyote of the Sunset, "Prairie Dude,"  
     Hear my zip!  
 In company with gentleman I'm rude  
     With my lip.  
 Down in front! Remove the nigger!  
 Or I'll perforate his figure!  
 I am fly, I am a fighter, I am flip!

— Stock and Mining Journal.<sup>6</sup>

On page one of early issues of the Cow Boy Packard ran a sizeable column of "Sporting Notes" which covered boxing,

horse racing, lacrosse, bicycling, wrestling, pedestrianism, baseball, shooting, polo on roller skates, sailing, and much else. Many of these items were curiosities. He reported the record bicycle ride without dismounting as being 230 miles and 469 yards, informed readers that T. A. Edison (the electrician) had caught a shark on the end of a live telegraph wire, noted that baseball was rapidly supplanting bullfighting in Havana, and reported Dr. Carter as having badly blistered his hands on the overheated barrels of his four shotguns as he killed 1003 bats with 1200 shots in 71 minutes.<sup>7</sup> But either Packard's source of copy dried up or his readers weren't greatly interested in sports, for the column disappeared from the paper after some months. It returned briefly the following year, but then vanished for good. The ex-college baseball star continued to promote sporting events, however. Through his paper he organized races and contests on the Fourth of July, initiated rifle shooting matches (which he usually won, beating even the dead shot Gerry Paddock), and challenged every other town on the Northern Pacific line to baseball contests, bragging that Medora's baseball nine could beat any other strictly local team "for fun, money, marbles or chalk."<sup>8</sup>

Occasionally Packard ran special features on his front page. One of these began in 1885 when, having noticed that



Webster's dictionary contained "scarcely one of the words referring to the cattle business and in common use here," he wrote to the publishers of the dictionary and received from them a "pressing invitation to gather together a complete collection of cowboy and other western words to be published in the next issue of the dictionary."<sup>9</sup> Packard called upon his readers to send him words and definitions, and shortly he published his own Cow Boy Dictionary. On August 6 Aparejos, n. to Over-slope, n. appeared on page one, and the following week Paunch, v.t. to Wrangler, n. appeared. The Cow Boy dictionary was forwarded to Webster's editors. On another occasion Packard published a five part series on the famous Lost Cabin gold mines of Wyoming, written by John S. Warn, nephew of the original discoverer of the mines.<sup>10</sup> Warn, otherwise known as "Alaska John," ran the Medora "Oyster Grotto" in partnership with a very large and friendly St. Bernard dog named John S. Warn, Jr. Packard's own series of special articles, "Our Black Hills Trip," ran on page one for five weeks, in July and August of 1884.

On page one Packard also ran most of his humor items. The humor column was not published every week, but did appear frequently. Most items were taken from the pages of other papers. A few were not:

### An Unpleasant Afterthought.

"Now," said drummer number one, as the train pulled out of Pittsburgh. "I have a bottle of whisky. Let's sit down and have a real good time. I only wish we had sugar and ice, we could have some toddy."

"I've some sugar," said drummer number two, unstrapping his valise.

"And my brother has some ice," said drummer number three: "he's in the baggage car. I'll just step in and get some."

And he did.

The Toddy was brewed and rebrewed. The whisky bottle was a large one, the supply of sugar seemed inexhaustible, and drummer number three made as many visits to the baggage car as the occasion demanded.

However, just as they were all feeling good and were about to compound a farewell drink, number three returned empty-handed.

"Very sorry boys," he remarked, "but the baggage man says if I take any more ice off my brother he won't keep."<sup>11</sup>

Most of the humor pieces in the Cow Boy were not particularly good. Even the following example is above average quality:

A citizen of Nescatunga once died and went to Heaven. At the golden gate he was asked his name, which he told, and where he came from. When he said he was from Nescatunga, the angel told him he could not enter. Accordingly he went down to Hades. The Devil asked him his name, which he told, also where he was from. When he said he was from Nescatunga, the Devil told him he could not come in. "My God!" said the man. "Must I go back to Nescatunga."<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately Packard missed his chance to substitute

"Dickinson" for "Nescatunga."

The best humor in the Cow Boy was found not in the "Smiles." column, but throughout the rest of the two pages composed by Packard—in his news articles, obituaries, puffs, opinion pieces. Humor was an intrinsic element of his style. He was handy with exaggeration and tall talk typical of the frontier, and in many a serious news story or editorial commentary a whopper would leap into view—as when, in arguing against the carrying of firearms, he observed that it was very foolish for the inexperienced man to pack a six-shooter since "before he can get his revolver out of the scabbard, he will be filled so full of lead that 'some tenderfoot will locate him for a mineral claim.'"<sup>13</sup> Sometimes Packard wrote articles which were entirely humorous, such as this almost surreal rendering of an event that probably had some basis in fact:

A party of Yankton Indians is in camp on the south side of the track. We did not look at the teeth of the patriarch but should judge that he was about four hundred and steen years old, perhaps four hundred and umpty. Conversation was voluble on the Yankton side of the house, between bites at a bone which had seen its palmiest days long before even the pigs had given it up at the slaughter-house. The old man isn't bigger than a minute and he is weighted down with a log chain to keep the wind from blowing him away.<sup>14</sup>

Nor was Packard ashamed to PUNish his readers. Arthur

Smith swam into the river after a bale of hay and the following Thursday Packard reported that Smith "haysn't dried out yet."<sup>15</sup> Often his humor was private, understandable only to those who knew the Bad Lands from the inside. In 1884 Theodore Roosevelt on a roundup cried out to some of his cowboys, "Hasten forward quickly there!" This strange remark was greeted with delight by the astounded cowboys and instantly "the phrase became a part of the vocabulary of the Bad Lands."<sup>16</sup> Later, in reporting on the semi-annual meeting of the Little Missouri River Stockgrowers Association, Packard wrote this: "The association can congratulate itself on again electing Theodore Roosevelt as president. Under his administration, everything moves quickly forward and there is none of that time-consuming, fruitless talk . . ."<sup>17</sup> A very light touch. Most of his private jokes were more heavy-handed, but equally impenetrable to those not in the know. "That umbrella won't be worth insuring if Levi flashes it up here."<sup>18</sup>

The humor of irony, from the gentle to the sarcastic, was regularly on view in the columns of the Cow Boy. In reporting the trial of the Marquis de Morès, in which the Marquis was finally acquitted of the murder of Riley Luffsey, Packard began:

Bismarck is reaping a harvest in the case of the Territory vs. Marquis de Mores, E. G. Paddock et al. Everyone who knew anything of the case and about as many who knew nothing about it, have been subpoenaed as witnesses. They were also subpoenaed at least four days before they could by any possibility be needed. This gave all the witnesses time to go decently broke before their attention should be distracted by the trial. . . .<sup>19</sup>

Most of Packard's local news items appeared on page four, though some of these occasionally "slopped over" onto page one where they were run under the head "Additional Local." Also on page four appeared the Northern Pacific Time Table, the Time Table of the Medora and Black Hills Stage and Express Line (when the line was in operation), the weather record (which included the number of golden sunsets), lists of letters unclaimed at the post office, a limited number of legal notices, and various advertisements. Local news included everything from birth announcements to obituaries. Packard reported pillow slip parties at the Pyramid Park Hotel, railroad accidents, the antics of Bob Roberts' pet bears, local experiments in beginning a pigeon post to the Black Hills, sermons to be preached at the cantonment, peculiarly successful practical jokes, gun accidents, lightning strikes, auctions, prairie fires, the arrival of travelling dentists. Interspersed among these local items were occasional puffs for local goods and services—that

is, notices by the editor referring the reader to ads in other parts of the paper, or praising particular merchants' wares of which Packard may already have been given a sample:

As the season approaches for the annual awakening to duty of the deadly massasauger, or prairie rattlesnake, whose bite is almost certain death, Mr. James Hannigan is about to confer a boon on an appreciative public. He has a cure which is warranted in every case to destroy all evil effect on the person bitten. The cure comes in liquid form in pint and half-pint bottles.<sup>20</sup>

Apart from editorial puffs, for which the editor was evidently paid indirectly, the local columns contained announcements of goods and services for which he was evidently paid cash. Usually these announcements were signed by the businesses or individuals offering the goods or services. In the local news columns Packard also puffed his own newspaper, his coal operation, his Studebaker wagon business, his insurance business, and the lots he sold for the Marquis, as well as the stage line of which he was the manager and putative owner.<sup>21</sup>

The largest part of page four was taken up by advertisements. Most of these were livestock advertisements placed by cattle outfits in the Bad Lands. Each stock advertisement featured an engraving of a cow or horse with the particular outfit's brand or brands clearly marked on the animal in

the appropriate place or places. In January of 1885 Packard lowered the rate for one of these ads to \$15 per year, saying that he did so in order to meet outside competition and adding that he really didn't believe the old rate any more than paid for the space the ads occupied.<sup>22</sup> On page four was generally to be found an advertisement for the Northern Pacific Railroad (complete with route map), and also an advertisement for the Marquis' Northern Pacific Refrigerator Car Company. Many Cow Boy ads, both on page one and page four, were for businesses in town, especially saloons and hotels, but a surprisingly large number—sometimes a majority—were for businesses in surrounding towns, particularly Belfield, Mandan, Bismarck, and Dickinson. A jeweler in Spearfish, hundreds of miles to the south, gave Packard a good deal of advertising business. A cattle breeder in Clear Lake, Iowa, ran ads in the Cow Boy. Packard also printed advertisements for firms as far away as New York, including the Hayward Hand Grenade Company, manufacturers of fire extinguishers, and Merwin, Hulbert & Company, manufacturers of metallic cartridges for firearms. Naturally, Packard often ran display ads for his own businesses.

One interesting combination of advertising, news, and entertainment appeared in a single article on page one of the Cow Boy in February of 1885. The article introduced a

character well-known in the Bad Lands, a former resident. Without naming him it went on to tell the tale of how as a boy in the east he had been supported by his invalid parents, how the "kid" then came west and made good as a cowboy, how he worked hard, became foreman, was finally acknowledged as one of the best cowboys that ever rode the range, and how during all his years on the range he never forgot his poor family back home, and regularly sent them most of his salary to supply their wants. Then disaster struck. One night the "kid" and his partner were awakened by rustlers. They chased the bad men, the "kid" was shot, and with his dying breath he told his partner, "Take large envelope from—pocket and send to father." His faithful chum watched him die, then accompanied his body back to his home in the east. There the partner told the "kid's" family what had happened. The family was stricken with grief:

The loss of their dearly beloved son, poverty without hope and the poor-house as a sole refuge was a sickening prospect. The chum could offer no consolation and forgot the envelope entirely until after the funeral. Thinking of it then, he gave it to the father and imagine the flood of joy that overcame him at the thoughtfulness of his son when he found that it contained a policy for \$5,000 in the safety fund department of the Hartford Life and Annuity insurance company. Sabe?<sup>23</sup>



Pages two and three of the Cow Boy, the ready-print inner pages, were filled with various news, entertainment and advertising items edited and printed by the Northwestern Newspaper Union in St. Paul. Most of this material was printed with considerably smaller type than Packard used in setting up the outer two pages, which meant that even at a glance the ready-print pages were clearly different from the outer ones. But the Northwestern Newspaper Union did attempt to personalize its format by setting the left-hand column of page two in type which matched that which Packard used, and by heading this column with a scaled-down version of Packard's masthead, a version which included the name of his paper, his own name, his town's name. When Packard's order for ready-print was produced, the Northwestern Newspaper Union simply set this special heading for him. The company did the same for The Dickinson Press, and presumably for every other client newspaper.

The ready-print pages provided readers of the Cow Boy with fourteen columns of advertisements, territorial news, national news, international news, jokes, curiosities, and stories. The advertisements were primarily for patent medicines such as Hotstetter's Celebrated Stomach Bitters, Tutt's Pills for torpid liver and costive bowels, and Cuticura, "A positive cure for every form of skin & blood

disease from pimples to scrofula." Through sale of space to these advertisers, the N.N.U. made most of its profit, and thus was able to sell Packard and other customers the ready-print sheets at a relatively low price.<sup>24</sup>

Stories in the ready-print pages were sometimes more than two columns in length, sometimes mere snippets. The following snippet is characteristic of the tone and subject matter of many of the longer tales:

#### The Fatal Bluff.

Thomas Turnstile was ushered into the parlor, where Hetty waited to receive him. In the soft, mellow light of the three-dollars-per-thousand gas, she looked more radiantly beautiful than ever, and there was a tremulous tinge of admiration in the young man's tones as he spoke to her.

"A year ago," he said, "I offered you my hand in marriage and you refused it because of my poverty. I am now rich and repeat that offer. Do you accept it."

"I do," she answers.

"Ha! false woman," he cries, "at last my revenge is accomplished. Know then, that I do not love you, and that my only object in coming here to-night was to humiliate you;" and with a hollow, mocking laugh he turns to go.

"Stop!" says the girl in an impetuous manner, and as she speaks Thomas Turnstile sees two men, one a lawyer and the other a stenographer, come from behind a Japanese screen which stands near an etruscan cuspidor. Hetty's face lights up with a weird, baleful smile.

"What does this mean?" he asks. "Why have my words been taken down?"

"It means," she answers, "that I am loaded, for bear." From "The fatal Bluff," by Murat Halstead.<sup>25</sup>

News reports on the ready-print pages were seldom, if ever, fresher than four days old, and usually much older than that, for the sheets had to be printed in St. Paul, shipped to Medora, and then printed again by Packard before they were distributed as completed newspapers. Not uncommonly stories carried date lines indicating they were ten days or two weeks old.

News items on Packard's own pages—pages one and four—might be a week stale if the events they chronicled happened to have occurred on a Thursday evening just after publication, but other local news items were only hours old when the Cow Boy came off the press. Even national news could appear in the Cow Boy very quickly. Ex-president Grant died July 23, 1885, at eight o'clock in the morning, at Mount McGregor in New York. That same morning, in Medora, Dakota Territory, Packard's readers learned of Grant's death on page one of The Bad Lands Cow Boy. The report had come through by special telegram and Packard had set the story in type just before running off his newspapers.

This was certainly prompt reporting, but far from the promptest Packard ever did. On one occasion he reported so promptly that he preceded the event. While gathering news one day he learned that the Montana Stranglers had marked two horse thieves to die on Thursday evening somewhere

in Montana. Knowing the awful punctuality with which the Montana vigilantes invariably carried out their missions, Packard decided the best thing he could do was to go ahead and print news of the thieves' deaths in his paper on Thursday morning, and this he did. But when he went to the depot to sell an armload of papers to passengers on the westbound train he was startled to see, descending from the train cars, the selfsame two thieves whose deaths he'd just reported. His frame of mind may be imagined. He was somewhat comforted to recall that they couldn't read, and he went ahead and disposed of his papers to the train passengers. Then, to his undoubted relief, he watched the two thieves reboard the cars. The express pulled away toward Montana, carrying the outlaws to their rendezvous with death. They were hanged on schedule.<sup>26</sup>

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

1. Cow Boy, December 16, 1886.
2. See Cow Boy, February 19, 1885. In brief, the fence law made farmers responsible for protecting their own property against the depredations of cattle herds. The herd law held cattle owners responsible for such depredations. Naturally, stock owners in western Dakota preferred a fence law. The fence law was eventually passed.
3. The bull law would require each rancher to put a given number of bulls on the range, to insure an adequate calf crop for everyone. Cow Boy, April 9, 1885.
4. Cow Boy, April 30, 1885.
5. Cow Boy, January 29 and September 3, 1885.
6. Cow Boy, January 15, 1885.
7. Cow Boy, April 10, April 17, May 1, and March 20, 1884.
8. Cow Boy, May 7 and July 2, 1885; May 8, 1884.
9. Cow Boy, August 6, 1885.
10. Cow Boy, June 4 to July 2, 1885.
11. Cow Boy, February 7, 1884.
12. Cow Boy, March 12, 1885.
13. Cow Boy, September 10, 1885.
14. Cow Boy, June 5, 1884.
15. Cow Boy, March 6, 1884.
16. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 101.

17. Cow Boy, September 10, 1885.
18. Cow Boy, March 26, 1885.
19. Cow Boy, September 17, 1885.
20. Cow Boy, April 17, 1884.
21. The following sample local news column is a composite drawn from various issues of the Cow Boy. It is shorter and perhaps slightly more interesting than an average local news column:

We neglected in our last issue to mention the Bad Lands minstrel entertainment, given by home talent at the rink, on the evening of the fourth of July. The variety part of the entertainment would have been a complete success if we had brought our guns along and killed all the performers at the beginning of the first act. The orchestra, led by Mose de Spicer, was simply indescribable. To escape a popular uprising, Mose fled the next morning for the Pacific coast. Two other members of the gang, for this or some other reason, skip to-night for the Big Horn country. One of the finest pieces of legerdemain ever witnessed was the invisible way in which the invisible Prof. Wellung deluded a confiding public into believing that there was a professor on the stage who knew the difference between a sleight of hand trick and four dollars a week.

Theodore Rosevelt, the young New York reformer, made us a very pleasant call Monday, in full cow-boy regalia. New York will certainly lose him for a time at least, as he is perfectly charmed with our free western life and is now figuring on a trip into the Big Horn country. He is perfectly non-committal on politics and the alleged interview with him, published in the St. Paul Pioneer-Press, speaks more for the reporter's assininity than for his perspicacity.

One of the worst wrecks for a small one that it has ever been our lot to see, occurred Saturday afternoon, four-and-a-half miles west of here. A steer thought he was "as big a man as the engine" and came nearly proving it, the effect being

disastrous on both sides. The engine and tender were completely disabled and ditched, four empty freight cars were badly demoralized and two more ran off the track. C. S. Grindall, of the E S G Beaver creek ranch, engineer White and the fireman were in the cab and all escaped unharmed, though how they did it after seeing the wreck, is a mystery. The loss will be about \$4,000.

Alaska John broke out in a fresh place yesterday and the following sign now adorns the front of the "Oyster Grotto:"

.....FRESH OYSTERS;.....  
:BLOOD RAW, DEAD OR ALIVE.:  
.....

"Toosh."

Several half-breeds were in town Sunday, indulging in unlimited fire-water. One of them was urged to fight the bears on a bet. But the wily half-breed had a level head when he answered: "Liver more wort dan dollars."

A social hop will be given at the Northern Pacific hotel Christmas night. All are invited to attend and all are sure of having a good time.

Any further shooting on this side of the track will mean business or that some would-be bad man is seeking an opportunity to get his head swelled.

The Marquis is enthusiastic over the fact that the streak of whitish clay found about twenty feet above the largest lignite veins near here has turned out to be kaoline. This is the finest kind of pottery clay, the most costly ware being made from it. If it turns out as expected the Marquis will put up large works, which will draw more money to Medora than the slaughtering business. We certainly hope there will be no disappointment in this new discovery.

(July 16, 1885; June 26, 1884; April 16, 1885; January 29, 1885; June 5, 1884; December 24, 1885; May 14, 1885; May 7, 1885.)

22. Cow Boy, January 29, 1885.
23. Cow Boy, February 26, 1885.

24. Dick, Sod-House, p. 422.
25. Cow Boy, November 27, 1884.
26. This story is told in Hagedorn, Roosevelt, pp. 193-194. I find no news item in the Cow Boy which supports it, however, despite the fact that all but one of the editions of the Cow Boy published during the period when the Stranglers were active are still extant. Packard did publish the following news item concerning hanged horse thieves on October 16, 1884, but it does not quite jibe with Hagedorn's story since it speaks of the lynchings as having occurred "last night":

There is a well-authenticated rumor that two horse-thieves were hung last night near Glendive. Let the good work go on.



## VII. Conclusion

The snow came down in a perfect cloud Tuesday and the ground was covered to a depth of four inches. There is no record of such a storm so early in the season . . . .

The Bad Lands Cow Boy<sup>1</sup>

"When it began to snow softly one evening in November we paid little attention to it, regarding it as the usual wet snowstorm of late fall. But by night the temperature had dropped below zero, the wind had increased to a gale and the Bad Lands was in the grip of one of the worst blizzards in its history, the first of a long series to follow, that would carry through until spring. . . .

"During the night the temperature dropped to the forties below zero. When we arose in the morning, everything freezable in the imperfectly heated house was frozen stiff. On the window panes the ice was almost a quarter of an inch thick. Small piles of closely packed snow, here and there, marked crevices in walls, doors, and windows through which it had penetrated. Upon opening the front door we found it blocked by a solidly packed drift extending clear to

the eaves."<sup>2</sup>

Thus began the awful winter of 1886. Young Lincoln Lang and his family were able to escape from their ranch house by the back door, where the snow hadn't drifted so high, but there would be no escape from the horrors of the season to come. In the furious winter that followed, cattle froze and starved to death by the thousands and hundreds of thousands. Some of them, gaunt and weak, "hung about the ranches or drifted into Medora, eating the tarpaper from the sides of the shacks, until at last they dropped and died."<sup>3</sup> Most of the cattle died in anonymous coulees and valleys and gulches throughout the Bad Lands, and were covered with drifting snow. When at last the great snows began to melt in the spring, roaring streams were choked with the bodies of dead cattle. "For days on end, tearing down with the grinding ice cakes, went Death's cattle roundup of the upper Little Missouri country. . . . With them went our hopes. One had only to stand by the river bank for a few minutes and watch the grim procession ceaselessly going down, to realize in full the depth of the tragedy that had been enacted within the past few months."<sup>4</sup> By spring there would not be a rancher in the Bad Lands who had lost less than half his herd, and most would have lost much more than that. From the terrible winter of '86 the cattle business in the Bad

Lands would never recover. And with the end of the cattle business would come the end of Medora's boom, the end of her hopes. The town was destined to fade quickly into the backwater village which it would remain for a hundred years.

As is true of most events, the decline of Medora seemed inevitable after the fact—inevitable that the Marquis and the Cow Boy and all the rest that fought to make the town a metropolis should have failed in their efforts. The Marquis was an adventurer, not a businessman, an initiator of grand schemes, not a sustainer of them. And even had he been the best business manager in the west it seems unlikely that he could have sustained his Medora slaughterhouse operation, for although at first glance—even at second glance—his idea of killing cattle on the range and shipping the meat directly to consumers seemed an excellent one, in fact his scheme was fatally flawed from the start. "Far removed from the sources of supply," observed Packard in later years, "his plant cost more in proportion to its capacity, than any in existence. He could operate only one or two months a year instead of every day in the year. His help was necessarily high priced and was brought from Chicago or Kansas City. Everything but ice and water had to be brought from hundreds or thousands of miles away. Transportation charges were much higher on dressed beef than on live cattle and the local

price on live cattle was as high as the Chicago price. Chicago packers depended for their profits on the so-called by-products; hoofs, horns, hair, blood and bones. These were practically a dead loss as it cost too much to care for them and ship them to market. Even hides were almost non-productive as they were sold at the Boston market, less transportation. Even if all the above objections could have been overcome, there remained the fatal objection that the cattle must be killed the day of delivery. They could not be fed as there was no feed raised short of the corn country, hundreds of miles to the south."<sup>5</sup>

There were many causes for the failure of the Marquis' scheme, but perhaps the main one was simply the harsh weather of the Bad Lands, which could not only kill whole herds in a hard winter, but which was too dry to allow growth of enough hay or grain for raising sufficient cattle to supply the slaughterhouse the year round. The slaughterhouse operation could not be made profitable so long as it operated at full capacity only a few months per year. So in the end the illusion which deceived Packard and all the others proved not only as high as the hotel, but as high as the slaughterhouse. He had been wrong in his optimistic appraisals of Dakota weather, therefore wrong about the Marquis' optimistic scheme to build a cattle empire on the northern plains.

Yet even as that final winter arrived to prove them all in error, Packard had much to look backward to with pride. For nearly three years he had provided the inhabitants of the Bad Lands with a useful weekly newspaper. He had written and acted against lawlessness, and had seen lawlessness decline. He had campaigned for organization of the cattlemen and organization of the county, and had seen both organized. He was typical of the best of frontier newspaper editors, who not only boomed their towns to make them look good, but pushed their towns to make them actually good—editors who stood for the values of civilization in a rough and growing land.

To the end Packard continued working for the community at large. In the elections of November 2, 1886, he stood for justice of the peace in Billings county, after having been persuaded by a number of stockmen to allow his name to be entered as the stockmen's choice. During the course of the campaign the question of his attitude toward lawlessness was brought up. Packard freely stated that, if elected, he would "follow consistently" the path he had "so clearly marked out, of opposition to the 'ba-a-d man' idea and would give every such offender the extreme limit of the law allowed." This remark caused his defeat. In an article explaining his defeat he wrote, speaking of himself, "The defeated candidate

has no reason to be ashamed of the remark that caused his defeat and in that light his defeat is one of the highest compliments that could be paid . . . he would far sooner be defeated than have it supposed that he would renounce the opinions he has always upheld."<sup>6</sup> Though not elected, Packard continued to have considerable influence on the course of justice in Billings county. He had the loudest voice for miles around. He was The Bad Lands Cow Boy.

By the fall of 1886 it was apparent to most Bad Lands citizens that business prospects in Medora were on the wane. The slaughterhouse had never come up to expectations, the freight route and stage line were dreams of the past. The Cow Boy kept a cheerful countenance, though its local columns grew thin. But here is the bleak view of Medora sketched by an Associated Press Agent in the Bismarck Daily Tribune:

MEDORA, DAK., Nov. 20.—[Special] — Medora has pretty nearly gone into winter quarters. To be sure, the slaughter house establishment of Marquis de Mores' will not formally shut down until the end of the month, but there are many days on which there is no killing done and the workmen have to lay off. The past season has not been of the busiest, and the near approach of winter finds this about the quietest place in western Dakota. The hotel is closed and its former landlord now runs a little boarding house, but early next month will make a permanent removal to the states. There is only one general store and its proprietor declares that the middle of December will find him, stock and all, hundreds of miles from here. The proprietor of the drug store will remove either to Wyoming or Winona,

Dak., early in December, as he cannot make his board in the place. There are very few families here, nearly all of the workmen being unmarried, and as soon as the slaughter houses close they will have to seek employment elsewhere, as scarcely any of them have a cent for time in advance of the present day.

A. T. Packard, the editor of the Bad Lands Cow Boy, which now has a circulation of 650, is evidently prospering well, and, with the managers of the Northern Pacific Refrigerator company and the railroad agents, seems to be about the only person who expresses an intention of spending the season here. The ranchmen now buy nearly all their supplies from St. Paul houses at wholesale rates, and there seems to be very little that is encouraging to a business man. Very little money has been in circulation and the whole season, to all save Marquis de Mores, has been very dull.

There are very few places in Dakota whose names are so familiar to Americans in general as is that of Medora. The "Bad Lands," the cowboy, the marquis and Roosevelt, all widely known, are universally associated with Medora. All the former are well worth considerable trouble to see. Most emphatically is this true of the Bad Lands, but as to their metropolis, it is usually a disappointment to the traveler. It is only another illustration of "What's in a name?"

Packard had now moved his presses out of the blacksmith shop and across the river to Little Missouri and set up shop in the old officers' quarters at the cantonment, where he lived with his young wife. Two days before Christmas, December 23, he put out a weekly edition of the Cow Boy as usual. Page one featured an attack on the corrupt activities of Sheriff Willard. Page four, toward the end of the local column, carried an ad which Packard had been running for months, offering to close out his stock of Studebaker wagons

at prices "cheaper than they can be bought in car lots at the factory." Following this, a list of letters at the post office. Brief minutes of a commissioners' meeting in small type. And there the Cow Boy ended. Forever. For on a cold and windy night shortly afterward a fire started in the cantonment and Packard was burned out. He lost records, presses, everything.<sup>7</sup>

Thirty-five miles away across the wintry land The Dickinson Press published this note:

Editor Packard, having recently lost his office by fire, requests the people in this vicinity who owe him money to settle their accounts at once. He needs the money and prompt payment should be made. Remittances will reach him at Medora.<sup>8</sup>

Had Medora been prospering, perhaps a single fire could never have ended one of the most exuberant papers that ever rode the range. But the town was not prospering, the fire proved fatal. Never again would the voice of The Bad Lands Cow Boy echo "from butte to butte" in the wild and desolate Little Missouri country. Just over three years after he'd arrived, Packard boarded a train and left the Bad Lands behind him, heading for a journalistic career in another town, another century. The great adventure of his youth was finished.<sup>9</sup>



NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

1. Cow Boy, October 21, 1886.
2. Lang, pp. 242-243.
3. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 435.
4. Lang, pp. 250-251.
5. Hagedorn, BLN, pp. 897-898.
6. Cow Boy, November 4, 1886.
7. Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 451; and Putnam, pp. 593-594, quoting a letter by Howard Eaton.
8. Dickinson Press, January 22, 1887.
9. After leaving Medora, Packard edited a newspaper in Montana (see Hagedorn, Roosevelt, p. 456). But two years later he was back east, in Chicago, where he remained for 43 years. In later years Packard wrote about sports in the kind of depth he had never been able to in the Cow Boy, as golf editor for the Chicago Evening Post. Packard died at his home in Chicago in 1931, after a long illness. He is buried in Westwood cemetery in Oberlin, Ohio.

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